Volume Forty-Five, Number Two, February *1968*

Commentary

Presidential Politics 1968

A Defective Institution?
by Marcus Cunliffe

The McCarthy Candidacy
by Andrew Hacker

James Joyce in His Letters *Lionel Trilling*

Boaz and the Israelites—A Story *Dan Jacobson*
Devaluation *George Lichtheim*
Translating the Psalms *Milton Himmelfarb*
The Draft Card Gesture *Edward Hoagland*
TV (Again) *Neil Compton*

Books in Review

Herbert J. Gans *Harold Fisch* *Joseph Frank*
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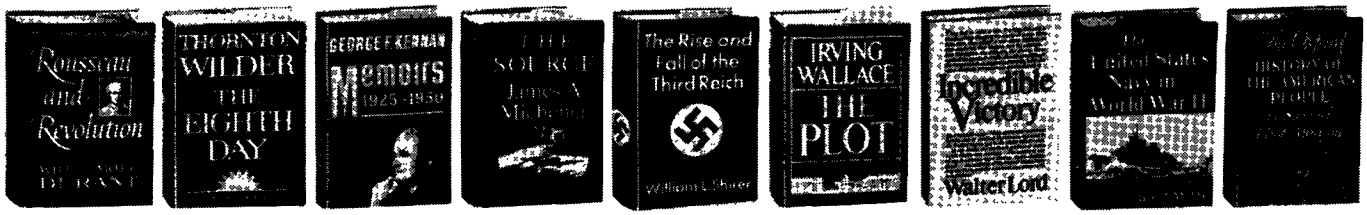

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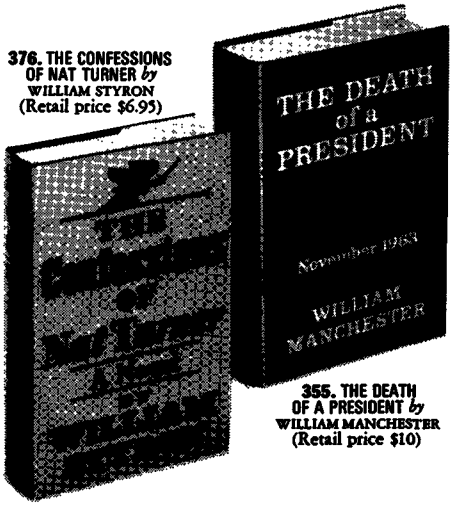

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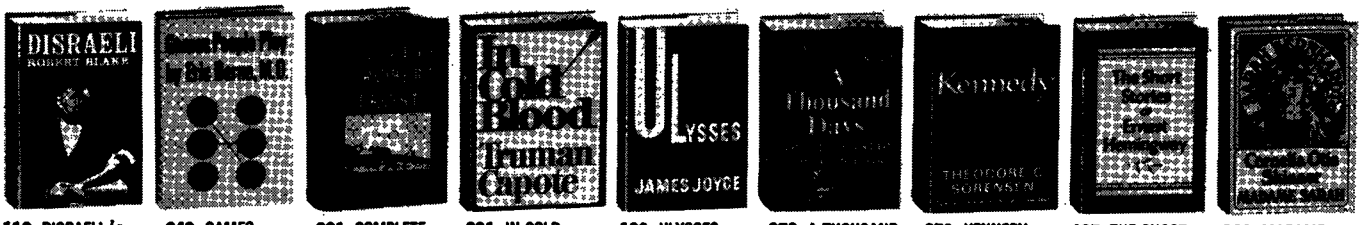

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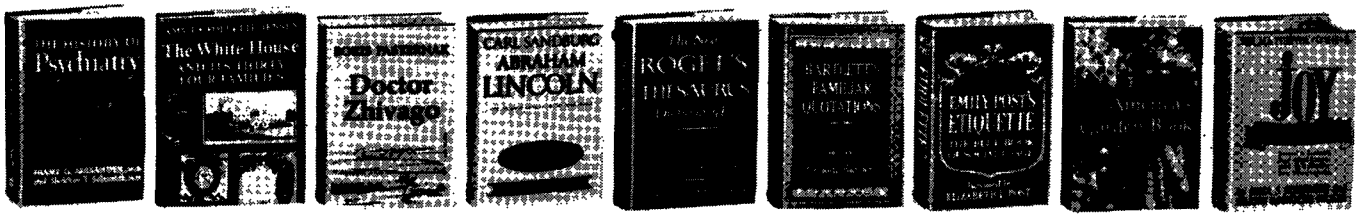

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Commentary

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Israel & the Left

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is a phony ring to articles like those of Robert Alter [October 1967] and Martin Peretz [November 1967]: Jewish writers in a Jewish magazine directed to largely Jewish readers, attempting to present the moralities of the Arab-Israeli situation as if they were objective observers. . . . The Black nationalists would surely understand were Messrs. Alter and Peretz to "tell it as it is" with regard to their sentiments, instead of dealing in pseudo-objectivism.

But there is a serious question for Left Jewish intellectuals and one avoided in these apologias for the Six-Day War. . . . The historic and strategic similarities between the situation of the Jews in Israel and the whites in South Africa are uncomfortably striking. Those Jews who like to think that their defense of Israel is based on universal moral values rather than tribalism would do better to address themselves clearly to this very real similarity than to heap abuse on I. F. Stone.

Now that the ratio of Arabs to Jews approaches parity (1.7 million to 2.3 million), there is a real danger that Israel will follow a South African course. It is this danger that underlies I. F. Stone's discomfort, and to pretend it does not exist helps no one. In the end the moral case of Israel as against that of South Africa, in any truly objective appraisal, rests on the quality of life of the "minority" people involved. Should the life of the Arabs in Israel become as bad as that of non-whites in South Africa, the only "objective" criterion becomes a numbers game—there are now more Jews in Palestine than Arabs—a rather feeble appeal. However, it does not sit well for us, at this safe distance, to recommend solutions to Israel; not unlike white South Africa, she faces grave danger in too great an accommodation to a threatening minority. . . .

For us Jews who live in a minority situation ourselves, the development of a racist Jewish state poses a frightful vision. A clear divergence of interest between Jews in the Diaspora and Jews in Israel could develop. We can only hope that Israel's response to the new situation will not force us to confront in ourselves a dilemma between universalism, the moral underpinnings of a minority people, and tribalism, the rationale both of nations seeking to rise from the dust and those that abuse power. I. F. Stone, perhaps imperfectly, has made this point which Messrs. Alter and Peretz have chosen to ignore.

MARTIN GOUTERMAN
Seattle, Washington

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . It has been fascinating and frightening to watch the steady drift from praise and awe at Israel's military feat to mounting criticism, particularly from Jewish and non-Jewish liberals and leftists. So far as our Jewish critics are concerned, I would suggest one way of understanding them. In general, they support causes which serve to protect them from their own intemperate, even violent feelings. When the object of their support confronts reality from a position of strength, they become horrified. . . . It was only after Israel had captured Eichmann that the idea that it is the Jews who are the guilty ones became popular. Israel's role for these Jewish critics is to serve as a protection against their own "weaknesses." Israel must neither be too aggressive nor too passive; too independent nor too dependent. She is not to take any clear and unequivocal position, especially about her own survival, because that might threaten their own comfortable lack of ambivalence about the country and its people, about liberal causes in general, and—primarily—about themselves. . . . Jews who are devoted to Israel have expectations too—they expect Israelis to be bolder, smarter, more idealistic, and more spiritual (if not actually more religious) than they feel themselves able to be. But they do not ask Israel to destroy herself so that they can remain saved. This seems to me the significance that COMMENTARY recognizes in bringing Robert Alter's . . . remarks to public attention.

[Dr.] JAMES MANN
Waban, Massachusetts

MR. ALTER writes:

Since I dealt in my article at some length with the self-congratulatory bias and the intellectual confusions of I. F. Stone's notions

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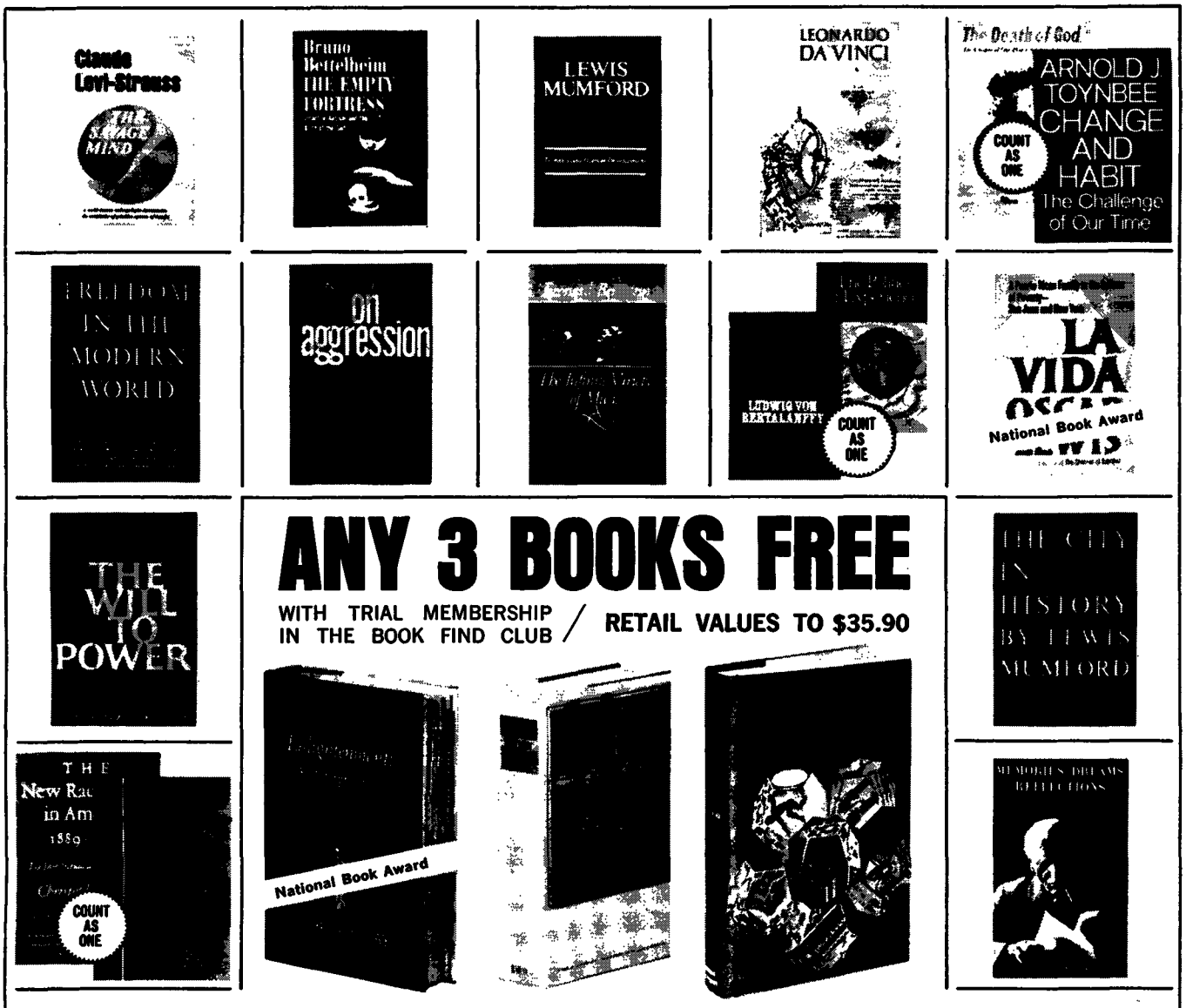

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of universalism and tribalism, it would be superfluous for me to comment on Mr. Gouterman's reaffirmation here of those inappropriate and misleading terms. Picking up another hint from Stone, he insists on the similarity between Israel and South Africa, a comparison that can only be attributed to a love of polemic analogies and an ignorance of the facts. The basic premise of this comparison is the notion that Israel is a colonialistic implant in the Middle East, but no essential aspect of the history of the Zionist settlement conforms to the colonial pattern. The Zionist pioneers were not *colons* who came to exploit the labor of an indigenous population. Seriously committed to a socialist program of national and individual regeneration, the *halutzim* worked the land themselves, indeed, reclaimed acre by acre from desert and swamp the land they worked. It was the dramatic betterment of life for all the inhabitants of the area brought about by Zionist labor and development that attracted mass Arab immigration from surrounding regions between the two world wars and thus paradoxically helped create the Palestine problem. . . .

It is equally absurd to compare the position of the Israeli Arab to that of the South African *kafir*, even in potential. The Arab is a voting, legally protected citizen of Israel, represented in parliament, free to engage in associations both within and without his own ethnic community. Despite Mr. Gouterman's dire forecast, the position of the Arab minority—economically, educationally, legally—has been steadily improving, not deteriorating, in recent years. Almost 40 per cent of Israel's Arabs, for example, are now members of the Histadrut, which is anxiously working to enroll still more of them, and anyone at all familiar with the political-economic structure of Israel knows what Histadrut membership means in terms of obtaining an interest in the Israeli "establishment."

To insist, as Mr. Gouterman does, on a "very real similarity" between Israel and South Africa suggests a disturbing affinity of outlook with the militant racists—which is to assume that in any confrontation between men of light and dark skins, the moral and political issues must be basically the same.

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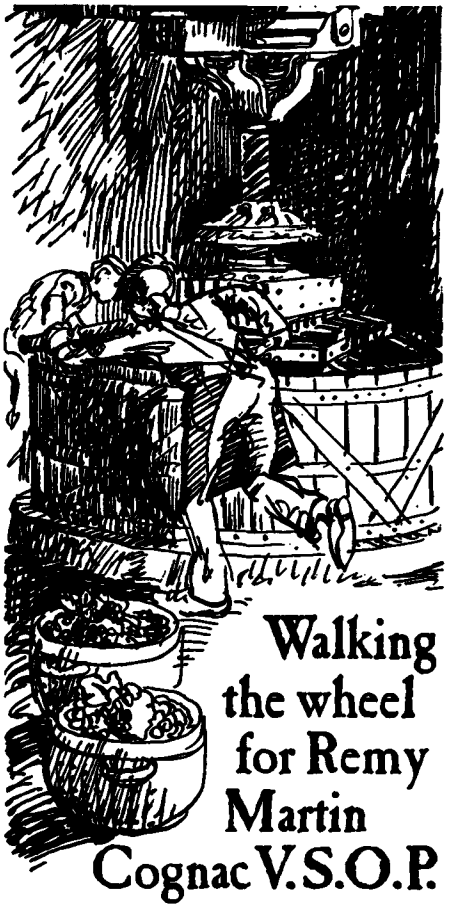

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REMY MARTIN

V.S.O.P.

To the Editor of Commentary:

I found it hard to follow Martin Peretz's article on "The American Left & Israel" [November 1967] primarily because he lumped a dozen radical spokesmen into one amalgam without analyzing any of their positions adequately, least of all mine.

Consider how neatly Mr. Peretz disposes of me in a single distorted paraphrase. This is what I wrote in the June 1967 *Liberation*, of which I am an editor: "The United States *probably* didn't send planes to bomb Jordan or Egypt—though Johnson's word is so discredited we wouldn't *entirely* dismiss this possibility or the more realistic one that the CIA did some espionage work for Tel Aviv" (emphasis in the original).

This is how Mr. Peretz paraphrased it: "Thus Sidney Lens . . . asserts in a lead editorial in the June *Liberation* that he would not dismiss the possibility that Johnson sent planes to bomb Jordan or Egypt. This lie . . . ."

What is one to make of this upside-down distortion? Peretz is trying to say, I think, that screwballs who can say that the United States bombed Jordan and Egypt obviously must be screwy on everything else they write about the Mideast crisis. This is dirty pool, unworthy of a man I like very much personally. If there was no room for a serious analysis of my views, there should have been no mention of my position and no attempt to slant it in this way.

Sidney Lens

Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

Since my return from Israel after the Six-Day War, most conversations with leftist friends have left me feeling that I was living at best in Cloud-Cuckoo Land, and at worst in *1984*. What gets to me most is the vast self-appreciation of Jewish leftists who think that they demonstrate their Marxist unsentimentality by their usually sentimental support for the Arab side. So I was enormously set up by Martin Peretz's piece. . . . It was good to hear his kind of angry . . . sanity for a change, after so much narcissistic piety from other leftists . . . .

David L. Gutmann

Department of Psychology

University of Michigan

Ann Arbor, Michigan

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Mr. Peretz's contribution to the debate over the June War would have been much greater if he had been more direct in presenting his views; he would then have had to defend an alternative point of view after pointing out the weaknesses in the Left's position.

I will grant that there are such weaknesses. I will not grant, however, that they have the effect or could have the effect of leading me or anyone else to condone the less than exemplary conduct of the Israel government. . . .

To be sure, Israel is not wholly responsible for the failure to achieve peace in the area. It can do nothing or practically nothing if the Arab governments are bent on war. However, it is far from established that the Israel government can do nothing short of appeasement or national suicide to change the policy of the Arab governments. . . . The likelihood is that the Israel government is unwittingly forcing the Arab leaders to expect and make preparations for the next round.

Robert Wynne

New Brunswick, New Jersey

To the Editor of Commentary:

I would like to applaud Martin Peretz's scathing and insightful critique of the New Left and elements of the old Left for their position on the Israeli-Arab conflict. But there is one minor point that needs correction, lest Commentary readers be left with the wrong impression about *New America*'s views on this issue.

As editor of the Socialist party's publication at the time of the Middle-East crisis, I would like to set the record straight. There were no "*New America* fears that the Israel issue would seriously rupture the Left when it could least afford a split." For years *New America* has argued against specious unity on the Left as this would harm possibilities for the growth of a healthy radical movement. *New America* has always been among those groups, including the League for Industrial Democracy and the A. Philip Randolph Institute, which counterpose the concept of a Democratic Left to groups like New Politics which attempt to paper over political differences in the interest of a united front. And, in fact, *New America* had been constantly attacked, for attempting to split the Left, by

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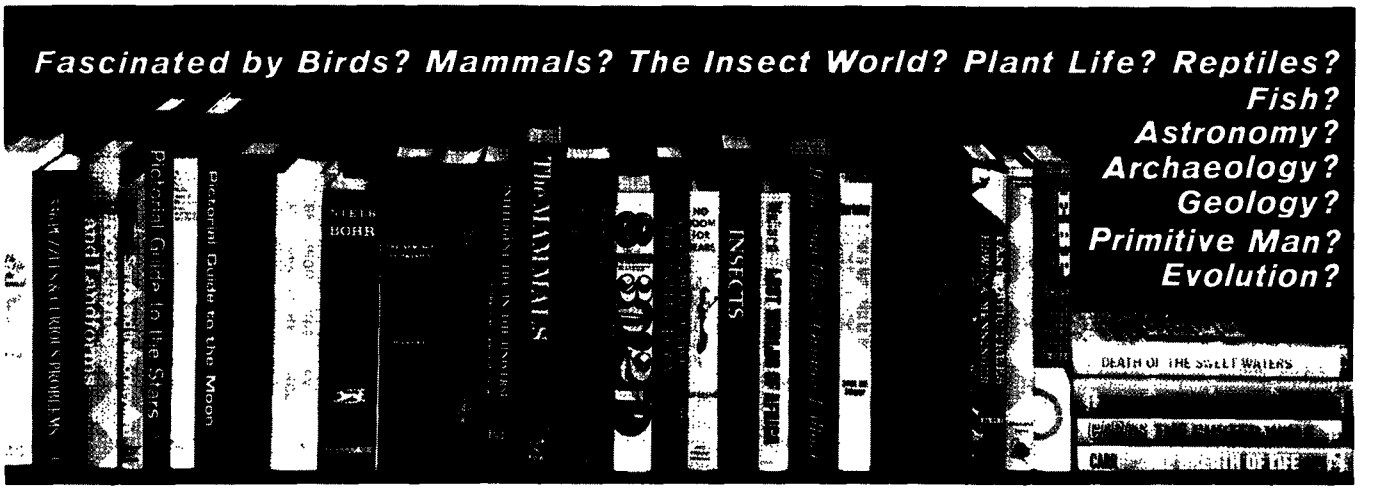

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those with whom Mr. Peretz takes issue.

The Socialist party's publication strongly supported Israel's defense of its national existence as did the Social Democratic movement throughout the world. *New America* was no less critical than Mr. Peretz of those on the Left, as well as the Right, who were indifferent or hostile to Israel's plight.

What *New America* warned against was a little more complex: it observed that the ideologues of the New Left had miseducated the youth in its movement; it would follow that at times of political crisis, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, when its sloganeering and simplistic anti-Americanism were clearly inappropriate, indeed harmful, many of these young people would become disillusioned with radicalism and turn apathetic or conservative.

In this regard, it is heartening that some, like Peretz, who went through the dismal experience of New Politics have maintained a commitment to responsible and thoughtful radicalism.

PAUL FELDMAN
League for Industrial Democracy
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The intellectual gyrations of the Left as described by Martin Peretz are less important than the way the Vietnam controversy is affecting the attitudes of ordinary Americans toward Israel. . . . Underlying the dissent over Vietnam is a growing neo-isolationism—the feeling that the U.S. cannot police the world, that it should concentrate its energies on its problems at home and leave the troubled areas around the globe to find their own regional power balances. Bearing in mind that few Americans feel any strong emotional ties toward Israel, it seems to me perfectly clear that there will be little popular pressure on the U.S. government to take any concrete action to support Israeli rights in any future controversy.

Nor do the attitudes of those Americans who support intervention in Vietnam offer much hope for future support of Israel. . . . They are grounded chiefly in patriotism and a sense of solidarity with American soldiers fighting in Vietnam. . . .

Russia's interest in the Near East is obvious. . . . But while anti-Communism still evokes a deep emotional response in a very large number of Americans, surely Israel would be unwilling to accept support offered by the U.S. as a cold-war tactic. . . .

The Israelis themselves seem to be realistic about American attitudes and aware than their future depends on themselves and their relations with their neighbors and with Russia—not with the U.S. The consequences (cultural as well as economic and political) will be profound.

ELEANOR GREENWALD
Jenkintown, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

So long as the Left-radicals vent their hatreds on bumbling rural Texans, big city politicians, and prissy university administrators, they are tolerable indeed, rather romantically attractive. However, now that they are attacking Israel the scales have been struck from our eyes and we see them for the McCarthyite bigots of the Left and insidious outsiders they really are. . . .

PHILIP BIRDSONG
Silver Spring, Maryland

MR. PERETZ writes:

I frankly do not understand the rub of Sidney Lens's plaint. With a gloss on the improbability of the scenario, he does say that he wouldn't dismiss the possibility that Johnson sent planes to bomb Jordan or Egypt. He says it in his letter above; he said it in his article—and that is that! He chooses to ignore that I also cited his fantasy about Ben Gurion and Dayan's designs on Damascus and Cairo. These two comments together reflect Mr. Lens's special inability to deal squarely either with the American role in the Middle East or with the realities of Israeli politics. It would be gratuitous at this point to engage him further in controversy, though a second reading of his article creates many temptations to do so, and at the same time reminds of how truly symptomatic of the quality of his analysis my allusions to his text are.

I am not without sympathy for what Mr. Wynne says. As it happens, however, I believe that the nature of the administration of the occupied areas is likely to break down the hostility of many Arabs to Israel, an obvious precondition for peace. Morever, the Israelis seem to realize very clearly that an occupation—even one as progressive as the present occupation—is only a temporary and always an

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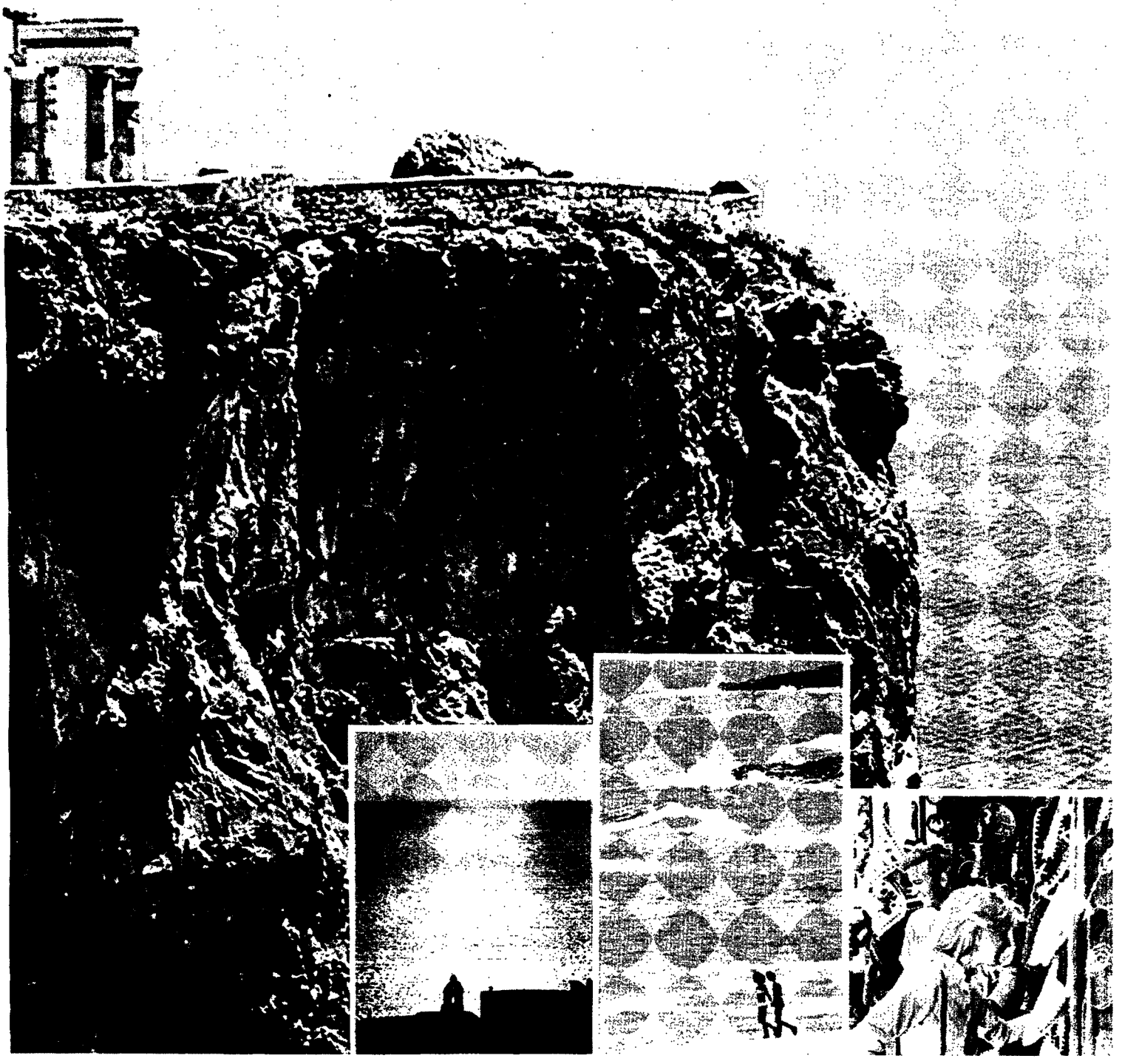

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unsatisfactory situation. But those who discern some small signs of flexibility in Arab positions might ponder whether they may have been induced by the Israeli "hard line" of refusing this time to return to the treacherous *status quo ante* without sure guarantees.

I did not mean to suggest (and I do not think I did suggest) that *New America* shared the *National Guardian*'s substantive views on the Middle East; but I am grateful to Paul Feldman for clarifying this point if any readers gathered that I had. . . .

It is not personal pique that leads me to note I. F. Stone's failure to respond to any of the criticisms of his articles which have by now appeared in several publications. But the issues raised in some of these are serious and weighty ones, indeed. An unusual kind of olympian hauteur must sustain Mr. Stone in his refusal to grapple with his critics—if not with this one than surely wth those who by dint of intellectual distinction, topical expertise, and long-time progressive commitments should command his attention.

Modernism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In an otherwise lucid and powerful essay, Irving Howe expresses distress that some modern literature . . . ["The Culture of Modernism," November 1967] takes on a doctrinaire quality. According to Howe, this serves to stifle "wholeness of response" in the reader, who must then embrace one of two impossible strategies: either ignore the "commanding idea" of the work for its aesthetic pattern, or dismiss the work entirely because . . . its doctrinal superstructure is enough to destroy the pleasures accruing from . . . its aesthetic pattern. One strategy would reduce a work to its most elemental formalism, the other would annihilate even the form.

Must we assume then, in Howe's terms, that a Jew should ignore the Christian humanism of *Paradise Lost*, or perhaps blot that work altogether from his literary consciousness? Does Swift's Toryism serve to consign *Gulliver's Travels* to the heap of literary "unacceptables"? Does Wordsworth's conscious use of an absurd myth—the myth of pre-existence—perform the same melancholy role for his "Immortality" ode? Must one believe in the reality of avenging Furies in

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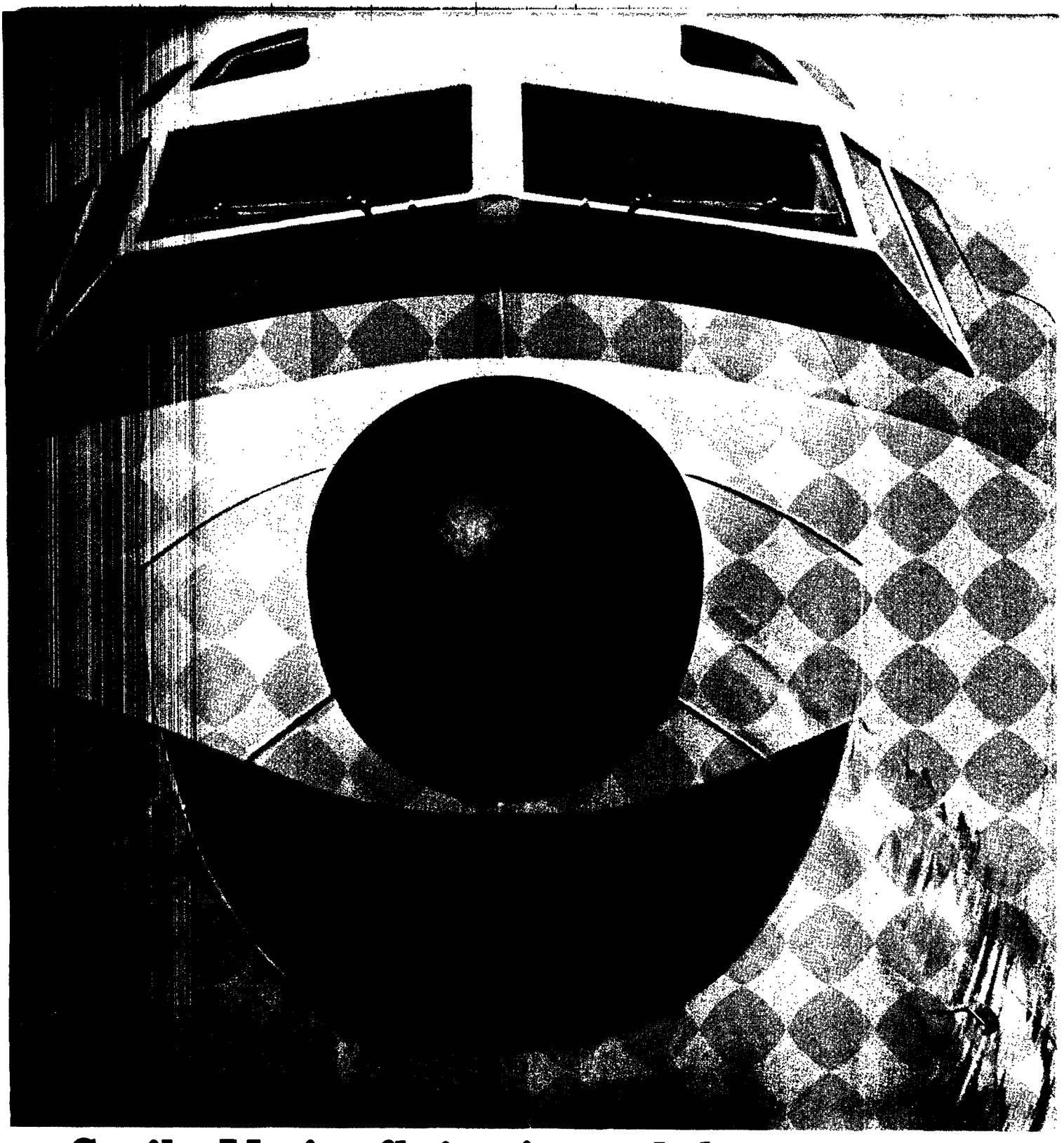

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order to respond "wholly" to Aeschylus's *Oresteia*? And must one be a theist to respond to the poetry of the Bible? Finally, must a reader completely blot out his historical imagination before he is able to grant "wholeness of response" to the writings of Irving Howe?

BARBARA F. LEFCOWITZ
Department of English
Howard University
Chevy Chase, Maryland

MR. HOWE writes:

Good questions; and if Miss Lefcowitz thinks there are easy answers I wish she would let the world have them. Perhaps, however, she ought first to look into the tangled discussions on the "problem of belief" which have obsessed literary critics during the last several decades.

One point: there is a major difference in impact, in felt urgency, between the doctrinal issues at stake in *Paradise Lost* and *Gulliver's Travels* and the doctrinal issues at stake in the work of Pound, Brecht, and Eliot. Time eases things; time helps shake the literary work free from its historical and ideological casing; time makes for a sense of timelessness. But *we* —we live close to Pound, Brecht, and Lawrence, and must respond to their writings with that impure, not-wholly-literary passion they would themselves desire. In 2167 it will be easier to read Pound and Brecht with the detachment we can now bring to the reading of Milton and Swift.

Ethnics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In Jervis Anderson's article ["The Voices of Newark," October 1967] he states: "When Negroes manage to escape from the Central Ward to the more prosperous South Ward, they exchange ghetto frustrations for open hostility with the middle-class Italians."

However, Newark's South Ward has no significant number of middle-class Italians. Known as the Weequahic section, this area, built up approximately forty-five years ago, was from its inception virtually all Jewish. About ten years ago Negroes began moving into the area in large numbers and now the majority of the South Ward is Negro. The rest of the population, however, remains Jewish, not Italian.

Many of the Negroes now moving

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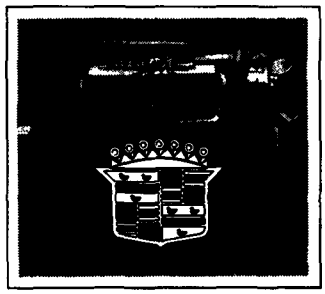

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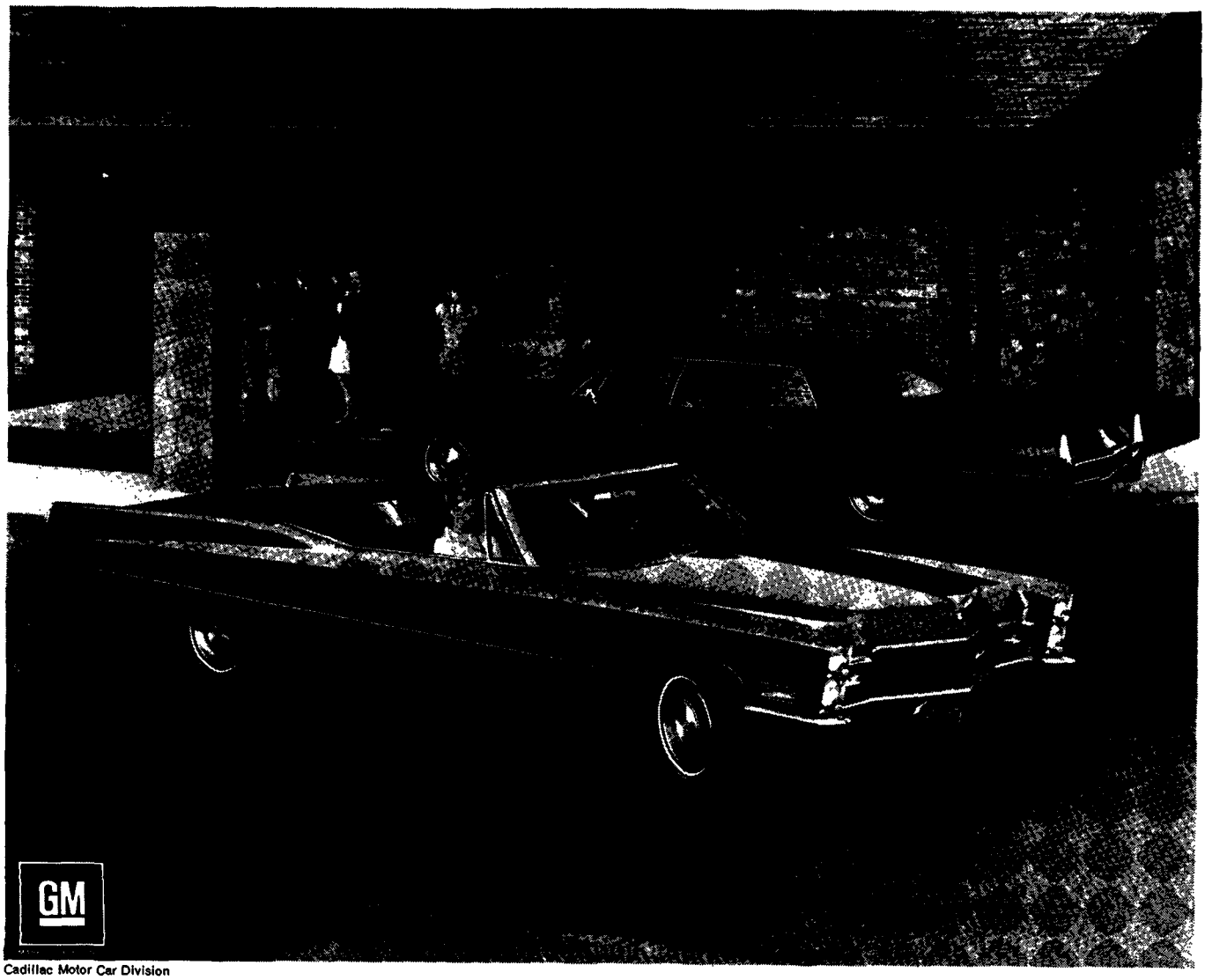

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into the South Ward were originally from the Central Ward; they are moving because their former residences were found to be substandard and were torn down. Instead of replacing these slums with low-cost housing, the city built middle-class apartment houses and is now planning on building a medical school. So for lack of an alternative, landlords and tenants have been forced into the South Ward where real estate and rents are considerably higher than in the Central Ward. Frequently, in order to meet monthly rent payments, several families have been forced to share one apartment, thus causing crowding and giving rise to slums. . . . The forced rapid movement of Negroes into the South Ward has also caused overcrowding of schools, as evidenced by the portable classroom buildings in the playground of the elementary schools of the area.

So the Negroes who have moved from the Central Ward to the South Ward of Newark have merely succeeded in exchanging one ghetto for another.

JOY SCHULMAN
Newark, New Jersey

MR. ANDERSON writes:

I thank Miss Schulman for her correction. The statement she refers to was based on interviews with Negroes living in the Central Ward. I accepted them as credible witnesses since, with varying degrees of accuracy, they can be expected to know something of what happens to other Negroes in their town. The spirit of the statement, in any case, does not rely on a flawless estimate of figures: clearly, my informants considered the need for statistical accuracy, or the fact that other problems exist in the South Ward, secondary to the naming of a grievance they felt strongly about—the hostility that Negroes encounter from middle-class Italians, regardless of their number. This is the main point, and I am glad to see Miss Schulman does not challenge it.

To my mind, at any rate, her correction also indicates that the people with whom I spoke may well have been refreshingly free of a reflex that is somewhat fashionable in many ghetto communities today: that is, they seemed to have made a conscious effort to differentiate and identify the ethnic sources of their displeasure rather than just pinning the whole thing on the Jews.

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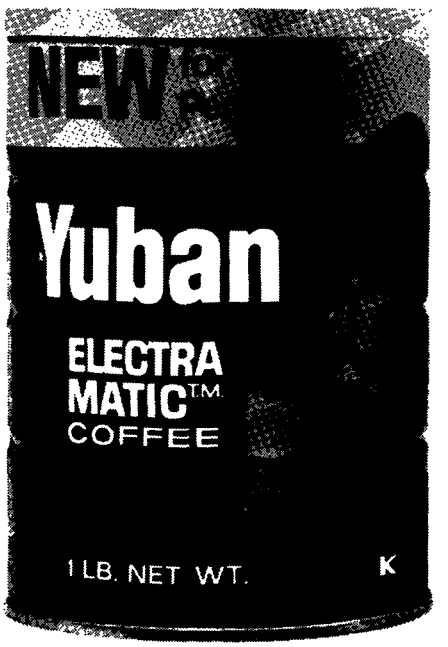

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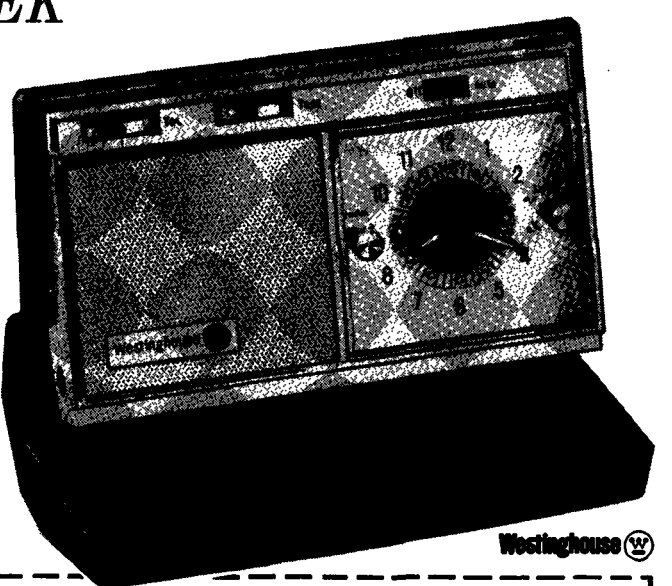

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Luce's Time

To the Editor of Commentary:

Joseph Epstein's "Henry Luce and His Time" [November 1967] is interesting and . . . adds a welcome perspective on this most unusual man of our times . . . but the author has a bias which one can sense throughout the article. It comes to the surface with his statement: "surprisingly enough, the specter of Hitler has no real prominence in this [Luce] essay; at no time does Luce broach the possibility that America might have limited aims in the war such as helping to destroy Nazism. According to Luce the purpose of the war is to 'defend and even promote, encourage, and incite so-called democratic principles throughout the world.'"

Joseph Epstein didn't do his homework well or else he deliberately overlooked this matter of record:

Within a year or two of the advent of Adolph Hitler or within ten or twelve years after its founding . . . *Time* featured Hitler as a front cover subject. Some of your older readers may remember this picture of Hitler seated before the "great organ of hate." The editorial content of this front cover subject was in keeping with the front cover.

Interestingly, despite fruitless urgings and invidious comparisons with Republican predecessors Taft and Roosevelt, it took Franklin Delano Roosevelt some years before he was willing to antagonize the Nazi regime. During those years he was besieged by requests to use his influence with the Nazis to ameliorate the condition of the hapless Jews in Germany.

Whether Roosevelt torpedoed the 1938 Evian Conference in behalf of the refugees in general (and the hapless Jews in particular), I won't say, but it is an incontrovertible fact that it was only in 1944 that his Executive Order 9417 created the War Refugee Board. Contrast this with the foresightedness of Henry Luce in 1934 or 1935 in giving public recognition to the great evil inherent in Hitler when others of us including the incumbents in Washington thought they could do business with the Hitler regime. Of course there were other great efforts by the late Henry Luce—effective work far in advance of the times—in behalf of the Negro and before it had become politic or fashionable.

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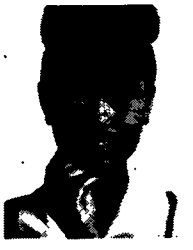

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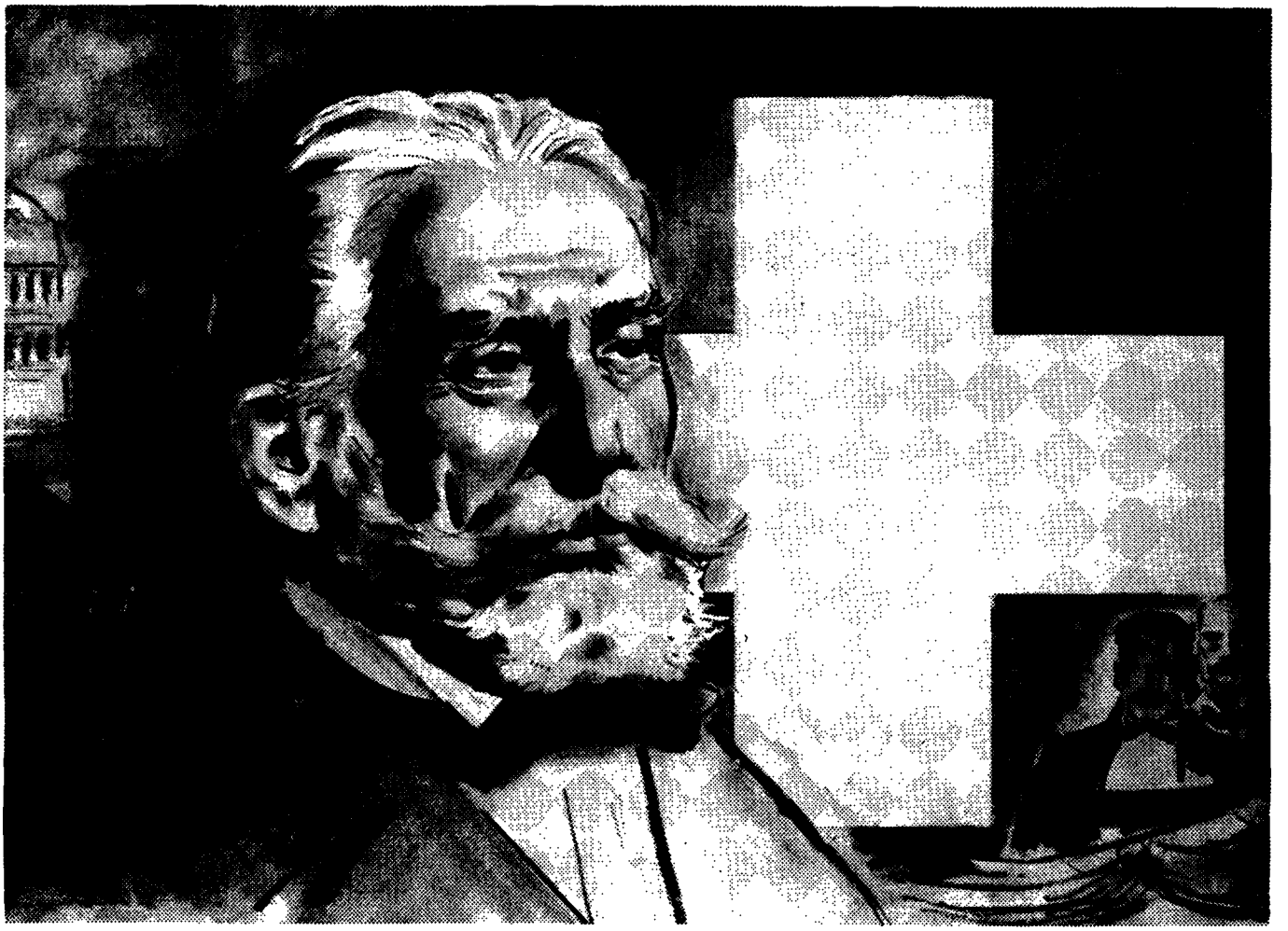

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A Founding Father of the American Red Cross

If the word "humanitarian" applied to any one person, that person could easily be Adolphus S. Solomons. Adolphus belonged to the select group of people who dedicate a lifetime working for the public good rather than for personal gain.

Born in 1826 to an English journalist, young Adolphus launched his philanthropic career soon after graduation from the University of the City of New York. He joined a group that helped raise money for an organization now known as Mt. Sinai Hospital.

Eventually, Adolphus settled in Washington, D.C. where he established the publishing firm of Philip and Solomons. It was here that his life of philanthropy and public service really flourished. Named to the Executive Committee of the Board of Delegates of American Israelites, Adolphus became the leading Jewish figure in Washington during the Civil War. He was a close friend of presidents, statesmen and generals. It was during this time that Morris Raphall, a strictly Orthodox Rabbi, became the first Rabbi to invoke the Deity for the House of Representatives . . . a testimony to Adolphus' influence in high places.

Adolphus' list of philanthropic efforts were as varied as they were long. He was Director of the Columbia Hospital in Washington and the Lying-In Asylum. He was President of the Provident Aid Society and the Associated Charities. He was Founder and President of the Night Lodging-House Association.

Perhaps the most significant of his humanitarian efforts were those devoted to the American Red Cross. He not only played an important part in founding the organization, but remained one of its leaders for seventeen years. It was in his home that the decision to form the organization was reached. He was one of the signers of the Articles of Incorporation, and its first Treasurer.

The feelings of the community towards Adolphus Solomons can perhaps be best summed up in this tribute given him by the great Jewish leader, Louis Marshall: "He believed in the sacred duty of personal service, and he performed that duty as a religious act, with cheerful heart, serious mind and willing hand. When he died, he was gathered to his fathers, a faithful custodian of the noble traditions of his people, and a saintly champion of the deathless mission of Judaism."

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Over the years I have become an addict of *Time* magazine. It may have all the faults you ascribe to it, but do you know of something better in its class? Once, when I got very disgusted with the degree to which *Time* is politically opinionated, I switched to a competing magazine. I found the competing magazine equally opinionated, but its reporting much worse. So, I went back to *Time* magazine.

Alfred S. Markus
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Mr. Epstein writes:

Mr. Braun is quite right. When you get right down to it, I suppose I'm not exactly wild about Harry. So I must plead guilty to his charge of bias; guilty, that is, if by bias Mr. Braun means having a clear and certain view of a given subject.

I regret to have to say that it is Mr. Braun and not I who has not done his homework. The simple fact of the matter is that in Luce's essay, "The American Century," the Jews are not mentioned once. Moreover, on page 42 of *my* article I mention that Luce and the liberal community found common ground on the following causes: "the fight against Fascism . . . and the civil-rights movement, at least in its more respectable manifestations." As for Nazism and the Jews, I am in agreement with Mr. Braun in finding the position of the United States and other nations toward the European Jewish refugees deplorable. That Luce was, in this instance, not unsympathetic to a downtrodden people is of course very much to his credit. Being a Jew myself, I suppose it is my particular "prejudice"—to use a word of Mr. Braun's—to look with special favor on anyone who has acted honorably toward my fellow Jews at a time when it was easy to do otherwise. But it would be parochial in the extreme to allow this single item to stand as the sole criterion for judgment. And because of this, I should like to stick to my original judgment of Henry Luce: "Through the agency of his magazines, he confused more issues than he clarified, harmed more people than he helped, and contributed more to the Gross National Product than to American culture."

As for Mr. Markus, he, apparently, would rather write than switch. As a fellow addict of *Time,* I hope I have not made him feel guilty about reading the magazine. All that I would urge on him is the

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argument, already made at great length in my article, that *Time* is the B-movie of current events and personalities. It goes down best, in other words, with popcorn.

Relating

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I thought an extension of Dr. Fraiberg's excellent article on "The Origins of Human Bonds" [December 1967] might be of interest to your readers.

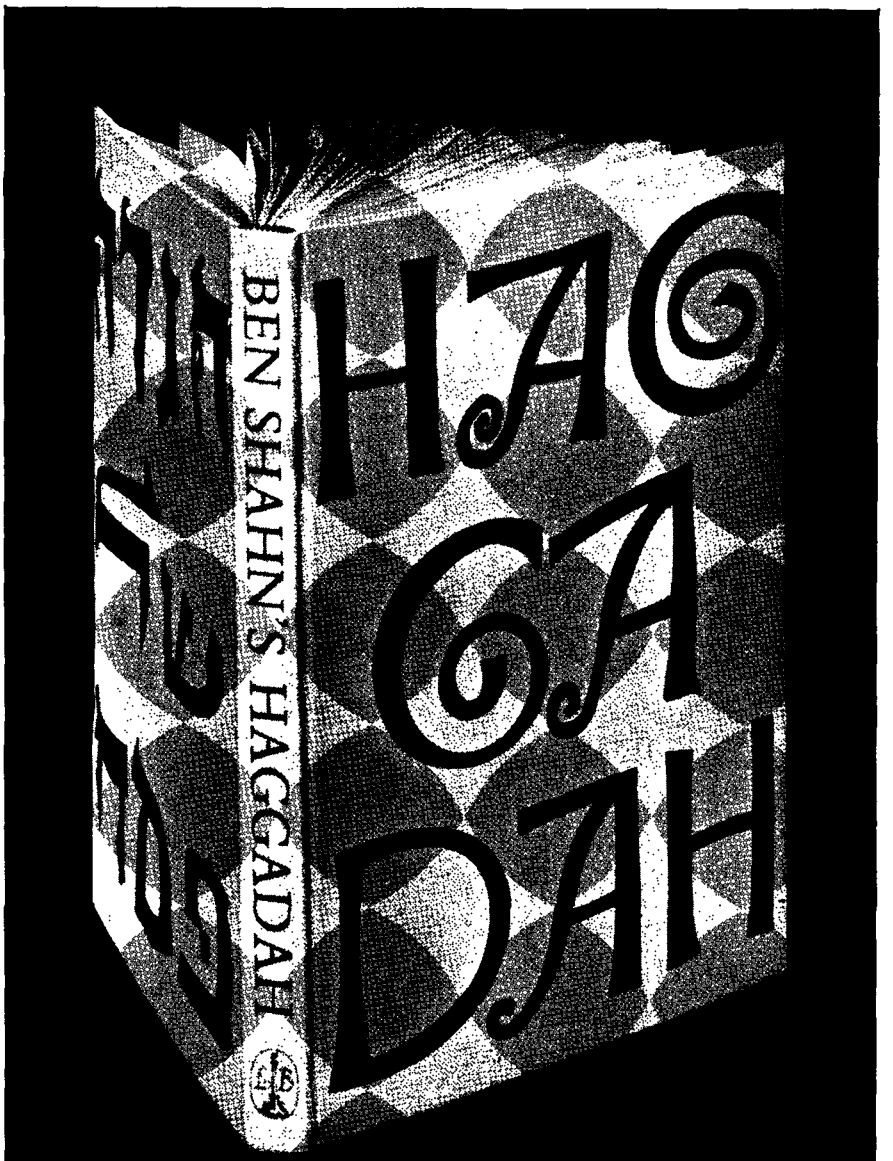
Dr. John Bowlby, in his article "Child Care and the Growth of Love" in 1953, quoted many surveys which came to conclusions similar to those stated by Dr. Fraiberg; e.g., "Prolonged breaks [in the mother-child relationship] during the first three years of life leave . . . children [who] appear emotionally withdrawn and isolated. . . . Since they are unable to make genuine emotional relations, the condition of relationship at a given moment lacks all significance for them."

However, he also quotes an additional study done by a Dr. Goldberg, of children who had spent their very early years in an impersonal institution. Dr. Goldberg found that these children were not affectionless, but rather, "craved affection," although they were similarly retarded mentally and physically by their socially-isolated experiences.

I would suggest that perhaps the difference might lie in the small experiences which even relatively isolated children must have with the adult caretaking establishment. If absolutely no bond was formed at all, then the lack of affect and "human-ness" might be manifested; never having had a human model, the child would be more or less completely retarded in human emotional development. If some start at forming a bond had been made and then abruptly terminated, the infant might feel an infantile rage and dismay which would be translated into anti-social rather than asocial behavior. Thus the actively destructive individual as well as the cold, affectionless one might both be traced back to the same severing of bond-relationship prior to three years of age.

MORTON ISAACS
Department of Psychology
Norwalk Community College
Norwalk, Connecticut

[Further correspondence on Mrs. Fraiberg's article will appear in our March issue.]



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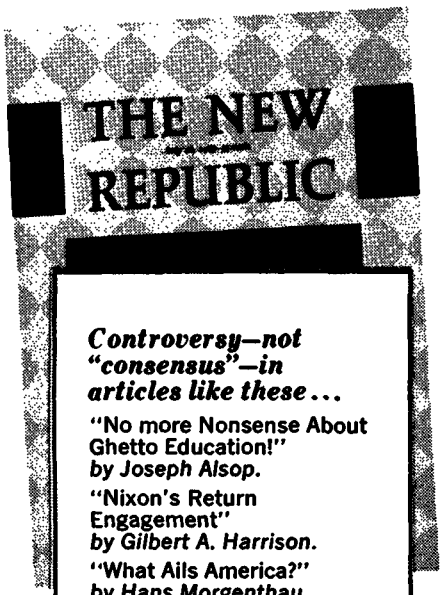

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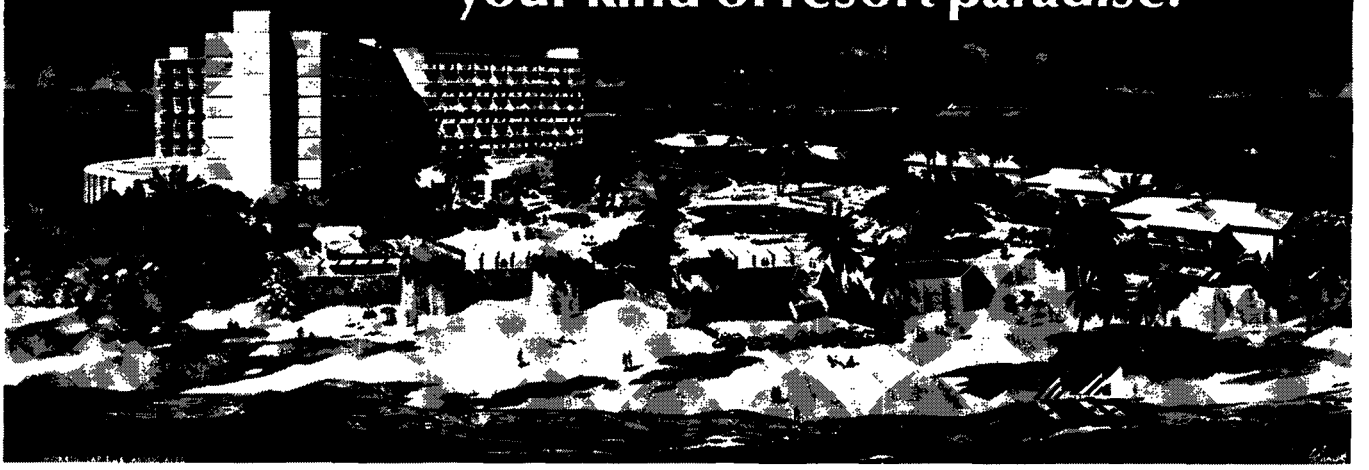

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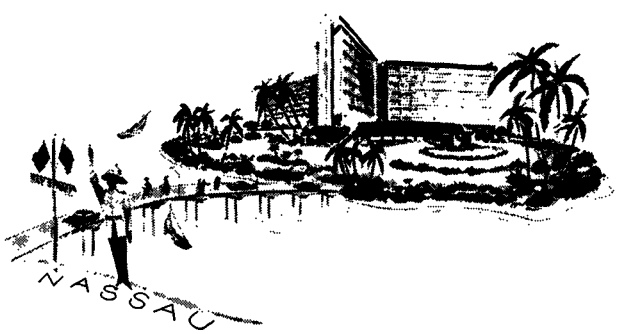

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A Defective Institution?

Marcus Cunliffe

With this article by Marcus Cunliffe, and the one following by Andrew Hacker, we inaugurate a discussion, to be continued over the coming months, of the issues surrounding the 1968 Presidential election.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENCY is an office of such power, prestige, and historical dignity that most of us are content to accept it as one of the prime given facts of the political universe. Surveying the shelves and shelves of Presidential literature in the libraries, becoming excited once more—despite moments of cynicism—by the predictive intricacies of the quadrennial contest, we are apt to take its traditional shape for granted. There would seem to be no more point in questioning its basic shape than in questioning the shape of the Matterhorn.

The formidable essence of the office is recalled to us yet again by the recent reprinting of a bulky three-volume set of *The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents,* with an introduction by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.* Here they all are, from George Washington to L.B.J., the courageous and the pusillanimous, the workers and the shirkers, the articulate and the ponderous. Nobody, not even a reviewer, *reads* such a compilation. Useful for reference or for musing (it has an excellent index), the set is imposing in its mere physical presence—evidence of venerability, continuity, competence, and sometimes greatness.

By scholarship and avocation Schlesinger is ideally qualified as an introducer of the enterprise. His comments convey with intelligence and wit what may be called the received view of the Presidency. This view, in brief, is that the office has exhibited a vast though intermittent growth in authority and responsibility; that the growth, though disputed, has been cumulative and irreversible; and that it has been beneficial, in providing firm, personal, and humane leadership for the government and the people of the United States. Like many other commentators, including such chief executives as Theodore Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, Schlesinger sees a division between "strong" (i.e. active, desirable) Presidents of the Jackson-Lincoln persuasion and "weak" (i.e., passive, undesirable) Presidents of the "Whig" or Buchanan-Grant variety. The early Presidents are usually regarded as strong, and for the 19th century their strength (or stubbornness) has brought Polk and Cleveland into the ranks of the approved. In the 20th century, T. R., Wilson, F.D.R., Truman, and perhaps Kennedy are admitted to the company, while Taft, Harding, Coolidge, Hoover, and Eisenhower are frequently written off as weak. In his book *Ordeal of Power* Emmet Hughes, who offers a disenchanted close-quarters view of President Eisenhower, draws a typical contrast between a weak and a strong executive by noting the very different responses of Eisenhower and Kennedy to their predecessor, Abraham Lincoln. The element in Lincoln admired by Eisenhower was humility: the anecdote he instanced was of Lincoln's readiness to hold General McClellan's horse if only McClellan would bring him a victory. The Lincolnian element admired by Kennedy was executive mastery: the anecdote he cited was Lincoln's announcement to his cabinet that while he wanted to hear their views on the Emancipation Proclamation, he had already made up his mind on the issue.

In this received formulation, the growth of Presidential power is historically associated with the assertion of federal as against state sovereignty, and of executive over legislative initiative: a collective triumph of liberalism over conservatism, welfare-state concern over laissez-faire indifference, energy over lethargy, national unity over parochial squabbling, internationalism over isolationism. On the whole, it has also come to be associated with the role of the Democratic party. Jackson and F.D.R. alike can be portrayed as "People's Presidents," exercising their executive power on behalf of the lowly citizen as well as in the cause of national integrity.

In the last few years this kind of interpretation, seemingly so self-evident to men of good will, has been jarred by events. The assassination of Kennedy in 1963 has produced a strange subterranean uneasiness, not only over the disputed data of the crime itself, but over larger, vaguer conundrums involving Presidents and the general public. The subsequent conduct of Lyndon Johnson has heightened the uneasiness. Democratic liberals have begun to talk like some of the Republicans who thirty years ago were accusing Franklin Roosevelt of dictatorship. With dismay they per-

MARCUS CUNLIFFE is professor of American studies at the University of Sussex. He is the author of *George Washington, Man and Monument.* The points raised by Mr. Cunliffe here are discussed at greater length in his book on the American Presidency, to be published by American Heritage later this year.

* *The State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, 1790-1966.* With an introduction by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Edited by Fred L. Israel. 3 vols. Chelsea House Publishers, 1966.

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ceive the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility, of denying renomination to any incumbent President who wants to run again—and what conceivable incumbent would *not* wish to be reelected? They may even be secretly relieved that the 22nd Amendment, hitherto regarded as a foolish piece of Republican spite directed posthumously against F.D.R., debars ambitious Presidents from holding on to office for more than eight years. In other words, Americans who were once sure that strong leadership was necessarily wholesome leadership no longer take the belief as axiomatic. What if strength is brutally misused? Or misused with the best intentions? What is the margin for error when the chief executive may commit the nation, and the whole world, to catastrophe? In these disturbed, confused circumstances there are signs of an attempt to rethink the received view of the presidency.*

THE EFFORT is easier talked about than made. In the first place, there is much historical truth in the conventionally respectful view of the office. It would demand a remarkable display of forensic skill, which no one has yet tried, to contend that Buchanan was a better man for the job than Lincoln, or Taft than Teddy Roosevelt. Taking the whole picture, the stability of the office and the caliber of its occupants would define the Presidency as an exceptionally successful governmental device. In general, it is hard to deny that the strong Presidents *have* been good Presidents: good as specimens of humanity, good as leaders, good for their country.

Other factors would appear to reinforce the familiar estimates. The almost permanent crisis situation of the past quarter-century shows little sign of easing. In foreign affairs, both tradition and necessity seem to locate authority in the hands of the executive. External problems, while not the sole ones, have dominated the American government since 1940. The spread of executive power has therefore, it would seem, been inevitable. Its further spread, or at least its continuance, would seem equally inevitable.

Similarly, the trend toward centralized governmental authority has been conspicuous and seems an unavoidable movement, observable in many other countries. It does not follow that the powers of the President *as an individual* have outranged or even kept pace with the trend. Some observers point to the appearance of a huge federal bureaucracy as a phenomenon apt to muffle and weaken rather than heighten Presidential power. Nevertheless, the swing toward executive, appointive government instead of legislative, elective government might be taken to determine the Presidential sphere of activity beyond the possibility of significant alteration.

Again, historically the legislative branch has not been dazzlingly impressive. If the alternative to executive dominance were legislative dominance, few Americans would welcome the prospect. In past decades when such was the case, notably in the last third of the 19th century, congressional performance was generally sluggish, obstructionist, and obsessed with devious bargaining for pelf and privilege. In face of the inveterate congressional habit of resisting executive requests, one is tempted to argue that in this area at any rate the trouble with the Presidency is not that it enjoys too much power but that it suffers from too little; for power, properly defined, must be the power to achieve results. If this is an unjust assessment of Congress, it is a commonly held one. Americans alarmed by President Johnson's capacity to commit the nation to full-scale war in Vietnam may derive a certain satisfaction from the current struggles of Congress to recapture a share of control over foreign policy decisions. But, perhaps recalling the low level of insight revealed in the Bricker Amendment, they show little disposition to rally behind Congress as the appropriate defender of their liberties.

Embedded within the historical record, and stretching back as far as the creation of the office, are recurrent schemes to reform and even to abolish the Presidency. Their very profusion, and the lack of effect they have had, weaken any present-day proposals. Plans to change the Presidency are readily dismissed as jeremiads and eccentricities, or as a parlor game played by political scientists sometimes prone to Anglophile yearnings of the kind that led the young Woodrow Wilson to draw his ideas from Walter Bagehot and to envisage the ideal chief executive as a transplanted William Ewart Gladstone. Even if such ideas were theoretically desirable, what hope would there be of actually introducing them within the time-hallowed American political context? Skeptics have noted that the modest reforms that *have* been implemented—for example, Presidential primaries, the two-term amendment, and the Presidential Succession Act of 1947—invariably create new difficulties not contemplated by their advocates. Better the devil one knows . . .?

Nor do the experiences of other countries offer encouragement to Americans to change their own executive system. None—at least no large country—has managed to govern efficiently by means of a plural as distinct from a single executive. Few have revealed as much stability or reasonableness as in the American system. The features of British government formerly praised by American political scientists no longer look so splendid, or so unique. Indeed, far from holding up a standard for Americans to venerate and if possible emulate,

* One such effort, which I came across just after writing this article, is a vigorously independent piece by the British journalist Henry Fairlie, "Thoughts on the Presidency," in the Fall 1967 issue of *The Public Interest*. Fairlie believes that the office has within it a marked inclination toward "Caesaro-papism"—"the most refined of all absolutist systems."

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the foreigners have tended to imitate American practice. British prime ministers have borrowed the vocabulary and the style of American Presidents, with their talk of "new frontiers" and the like.

We seem to be left where we started: namely either with the cheerful belief that the Presidency comes as near perfection as can be achieved in an imperfect world, or with the pragmatic belief that it is unwise to tinker with long-established mechanisms. The State of the Union, we may conclude after tracking through over a hundred and seventy years of presidential utterances, was and is as good as may be expected.

BUT SUCH TESTIMONY leaves much unsaid. The historical record is in actuality less clear and less unanimous. Thus, it is worth stressing that over most of America's past the White House has been occupied not by "strong" but by "weak" Presidents. Some no doubt were truly weak: inept, timorous, petty. Others however were "weak" not out of temperamental inability but out of conviction: men who did not think it right for the federal government to encroach upon the states, or else for the executive to encroach upon the legislature. Some have insisted that the prime duty of the President is to act as head of state, rather than as head of government or as head of a political party.

Pursuing this line, we might more revealingly divide Presidents not into "strong" and "weak" groups, but into the "aggrandizers" and the "moderates." It then becomes possible to see the undesirable consequences of executive "strength." One of the worst effects has been on Congress. The federal legislature, while certainly not lacking in aggressive impulses, has over the decades been mainly thrust on the defensive. In American folklore the Presidency has been extolled, and Congress vilified. Through being robbed of initiative, or being treated as a bunch of boobies and crooks, Congress has been made to appear negative and irresponsible. It has responded, like the cast of a play whose principal performer constantly hogs the limelight, by unworthy but perfectly understandable sulks and threats of sabotage. The price paid for an enlarged and glorified Presidency has been a diminished, neurotically self-important legislative branch.

Moderate Presidents have themselves had to pay a price for the performances of aggrandizing predecessors. Every bold Presidential administration has induced a violent reaction. Congress has kicked back. Though it has been chided by historians for doing so, its behavior perhaps ought to be seen as a proof of continuing legislative vigor rather than of stupid jealousy. The victims have been the unoffending new occupants of the White House. Van Buren was punished for the vehemences of his predecessor, Andrew Jackson. The repercussions of Jacksonianism led to a run of "weak" Presidents interrupted briefly by the Mexican War and then resumed through the 1850's. Andrew Johnson bore the brunt of the aggrandizements of Abraham Lincoln; again the consequence was a run of one-term, "weak" Presidents terminated only by another war—that of 1898. William Howard Taft's tribulations were heightened by the previous executive forays of Theodore Roosevelt. Strong executives may think of themselves as dominant characters; they rarely realize that they strike resentful contemporaries as domineering. After the large claims of Woodrow Wilson came the deliberate "abdication" or moderateness of Harding and Coolidge. Harry Truman, faced with the hostilities accumulated during Franklin Roosevelt's Presidential tenure, would probably have met with less resistance if F.D.R. had not held on to office so long. Truman's own assertions of executive authority did nothing to dissipate the nation's stored-up antagonism to Presidential overlordship. In the wake of a double dose of Roosevelt-Truman "strength," the nation was ready for a milder and more congressionally-oriented regime.

There is a cycle in these matters. The two Schlesingers, father and son, have discerned a regular alternation between periods of reform—demanding and receiving active Presidential leadership—and periods of inertia during which the men in the White House are quiescent. This is plausible. But why should an alternation exist? In part, at least, because the movement oscillates between aggressive (and therefore ultimately unpopular) executive conduct, and more acceptably non-aggressive conduct. To which it may be answered that in the long run modest executive behavior *also* generates discontent, and a public demand for more conspicuous leadership. True. But this is not to gainsay the importance of the converse sources of alarm; and it is doubtful whether anger at executive inactivity has been as consistent a feature of the American scene as disapproval of executive aggrandizement. One reason is that in many spheres the President is *not* the only provider of leadership. At times of crisis the American people may in fact require of him not so much direct and detailed executive programs, as an *appearance* of poised, responsible control—the creation of an atmosphere of sober concern which will oblige *other* agencies of government to take action.

Such an analysis gains in credibility when we note that several of the so-called "weak" Presidents have had quite clear conceptions of their role. Andrew Jackson's successors shared a coherent "Whig" view of the Presidential office. The duty of the chief executive, they agreed, was to symbolize the nation's aspirations, to symbolize the party of which he was the titular and temporary head, and to confine his tenure to a single term—as Jackson himself had initially recommended. For all his personal inadequacy, Presi-

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dent Grant was in tune with the tradition of executive moderateness when he said of the Depression of 1873, "It is the duty of Congress to devise the method of correcting the evils which are acknowledged to exist, and not mine." Taft was not simply trying to rationalize his own failure, or to be revenged on Teddy Roosevelt, when he wrote *Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers* (1916). Irritated that Roosevelt had likened himself to Lincoln, and Taft to Buchanan, the ex-President retorted that this was crude egotism and that T.R.'s doctrine was dangerous. Taft adhered to the numerous company of objectors to those Presidents who "played their parts upon the political stage with histrionic genius and commanded the people almost as if they were an army and the President their Commander-in-Chief." Fortunately, Taft added, "there have always been men in this free and intelligent people of ours, who apparently courting political . . . disaster have registered protest against this undue Executive domination. . . ." In the same way, Warren G. Harding's declaration of Presidential moderation, in his first annual message to Congress of December 1921, was not necessarily indicative of crass indolence, but of a widely held viewpoint:

> During the anxieties of war, when necessity seemed compelling, there were excessive grants of authority and an extraordinary concentration of powers in the Chief Executive. The repeal of wartime legislation and the automatic expirations which attended the peace proclamations have put an end to these emergency excesses, but I . . . wish to go further than that. . . .

Coolidge, Hoover, and Eisenhower abided by the same convictions. None seems likely to be celebrated by posterity as a great and wise upholder of the American political creed. The charge against the non-aggrandizing Presidents of the 20th century, however, is not that they failed to take personal charge over every facet of national life. It is that they failed to imbue the nation with a sense of Presidential greatness. Canny, homely, well-meaning, they did not seem and were not truly eminent. Otherwise, they were not bad Presidents according to their lights. They do not always come off badly in a comparison with the aggrandizers. Consider again Emmet Hughes's pairing of Eisenhower and Kennedy, in relation to their idea of Lincoln. Is humility not after all admirable in a President, as Eisenhower thought? Is it necessarily a mark of decisive leadership for a President to impose his ideas on his cabinet, instead of consulting closely with them? True, the American cabinet is by its nature not a powerful, united executive committee, capable of working in exact rapport with the President. But the cabinet's fragmented, subordinate status is at least in part attributable to the high-handed behavior of the aggrandizing Presidents; Andrew Jackson set the precedent here, by dismissing practically his entire first cabinet, and later removing two Treasury Secretaries before he could find a suitably compliant nominee.

In fact if we study Jackson with the cold eye of his contemporary opponents, he stands before us as a fateful figure in the Presidential lineage. His example was in the minds of the Swiss, as they drew up a new constitution for their country in 1848. They adapted several features of the American Constitution. They did not settle for a President, because a single executive seemed an invitation to dictatorship. Among the documents that they might have consulted was an essay on *Federal Government* (1840) by Abel Upshur, who became Secretary of State under President Tyler. Upshur regarded the section on the executive branch as the "most defective part" of the American Constitution; the President's prerogative was defined in dangerously "loose and unguarded terms." The same fear prompted another American, Henry C. Lockwood, to argue in *The Abolition of the Presidency* (1884) that American liberty would be in peril if the single-man executive were not replaced with a plural executive on the Swiss model. "Let a person be chosen to office," said Lockwood, "with power conferred upon it equal to that of the Presidency of the United States, and it will make but little difference whether the law actually gives him the right to act . . . or not. . . . No argument that the law has been violated will avail. . . . He is a separate power in himself. . . . The sentiment of hero worship, which . . . prevails among the American people, will endorse him."

Few Americans in Lockwood's era would have gone as far as he, in reforming the Presidency out of existence. Fewer still, though, envisaged a strengthening of the office as a solution to the nation's ills. Plenty of Americans in the last decades of the 19th century were aware of the nation's problems and anxious to tackle them. It is a remarkable feature of the time that Henry George, Edward Bellamy, and other reformers saw no need to turn to the Presidency for a lead. Perhaps the chief reason is that in common with conservative Americans they were the unwitting prisoners of laissez-faire, unable to escape its confines. But they would have resisted any such explanation. A most instructive epitome of liberal thought is to be found in the long article on "The Presidency" in *The Encyclopedia of Social Reform* (1897), edited by the Rev. William D. P. Bliss, a Christian Socialist open to every scheme for human betterment. "Very many believe," Bliss observed, "that the Presidents of the United States have too much power." Almost every authority cited by him supported the opinion that the office was unsatisfactory. Among the testimony was a radical memorial to Congress, petitioning for the abolition of the Presidency: "It is a constantly menacing, constantly growing cause of danger to the republic—whose eventual ruin it must inevitably occasion."

In the seventy years since Bliss's compendium

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was published the scope of executive authority has widened in a way that would have horrified him and his contributors. These earlier expressions of alarm are not to be laughed off; for some of the things that worried them are still with us. The President does not of course wield absolute power; on most domestic issues his freedom of maneuver is severely restricted. The problem is that the President is *thought* to be a superman. Americans yearn to be convinced that Presidential candidates are men of magical attainments. With each quadrennial contest the voters, once they have decided that one particular candidate will be the most popular, immediately hypnotize themselves into the notion that his popularity is proof of transcendent ability. It is expected that with each new incumbent the office will undergo a transfiguration. The victorious candidate invariably enjoys a brief early spell of ecstatic acclaim. The limitations of his role are temporarily forgotten. The immense federal structure is dramatized and personalized as if it consisted of only one man, remotely attended by colorless underlings and challenged only by a horde of bloody-minded Congressmen. The President is counted upon to eradicate all the nation's ills. Far too much is expected of him. Soon the reaction sets in; having failed to usher in the millennium, he becomes a target for criticism as exaggerated as the previous adulation. Both attitudes are unhealthy. Both spring from the excessive claims made by and for the office in the 20th century. Partisan emotion and residual millennial expectations encourage the incumbent's supporters to back him for a second term. The second time round, his reputation almost always slumps disastrously, even among his followers. Even the moderate Calvin Coolidge experienced the process. "An examination of the records of those Presidents who have served eight years," he said in his autobiography, "will disclose in most every instance the latter part of their term has shown very little in the way of constructive accomplishment."

THE ABUSE meted out to Presidents has a healthily scurrilous element. Some commentators see it as a guarantee that Americans will never accept a real dictator: their natural irreverence protects them against such psychological radiation. But the scurrility has a hysterical tinge. John F. Kennedy may not have deserved all the praise that was heaped upon him: he certainly did not deserve the corrosive denunciations that were circulating before his death. The one grew from the other. Beneath the affectionate, admiring jokes about the "First Family" lay the anger and hatred that any family should stand so high. Lyndon B. Johnson may not be the most lovable of men. He may well have been overpraised for his legislative accomplishments in 1964. Could he, though, could anyone, be as vile, as individually blameworthy as he is depicted by his current detractors?

Nor is the opening chorus of praise which greets incoming Presidents unanimous. As many observers have remarked, there is something unwholesome in an arrangement that establishes the leader of a political party as the head of state. The head of state has a ceremonial, symbolic function; he must represent *all* the people. But in American Presidential elections the successful candidate is frequently elected by very little more than 50 per cent of the popular vote. Indeed, in no less than fourteen elections, including those of Wilson in 1912 and 1916, Truman in 1948, and Kennedy in 1960, the winner has failed to secure a popular majority. Kennedy, who gained 49.71 per cent of the popular vote, defeated his opponent Richard M. Nixon by a margin of only one-sixth of one per cent. Political analysts tend on the whole to congratulate the United States on the stability that accrues from so evenly balanced a two-party system. But there are harmful aspects. Roughly half the population, sometimes more, have to accept a man they did not want, a candidate against whom they voted, as the "elective monarch" of their country. Still more galling, in 20th-century circumstances they will almost certainly have to put up with him for a second term: eight years in all.

Assassination attempts are an index of the frustrations created by the American Presidency. The first known attempt, significantly, was made on Andrew Jackson, in 1835. The would-be assassin was insane: he believed that he was the rightful heir to the throne of America, and that "King Andrew" was a usurper. Yet his crazed logic was not much at variance with the political discourse of the day. Jackson, after announcing that he favored a single-term Presidency, ran a second time and was elected. Jackson's enemies, including Senators Clay and Calhoun, were in earnest in denouncing him as a tyrant. Jackson claimed he had received five hundred letters from people who threatened to kill him. He himself believed the assassin had been hired by Whig adversaries. There followed a macabre episode in American political history: John C. Calhoun, a former vice-president and a member of the Senate, felt obliged to rise from his seat and deny that he had plotted to kill the President.

The second attempt on the life of a President, against Lincoln in 1865, was likewise directed against a chief executive who had been heatedly accused of tyranny, and who had also been re-elected for a second term. Though not temperamentally an aggrandizing President, McKinley acquired sudden prominence and authority as the result of the Spanish-American War; he too, at the moment of his assassination in 1901, had recently been reelected. Theodore Roosevelt was much criticized for attempting to return to power—and in effect to a third term—by campaigning as a Progressive candidate in 1912. In a hostile cartoon of that year he is shown brandishing a scroll in-

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scribed "THEODORE ROOSEVELT FOR EVER AND EVER"; in another he pins up a proclamation signed "TR REX" which announces: "*I* am the will of the people. . . . *I* chose myself to be leader. . . . *I* will have as many terms in office as *I* desire." He received a bullet wound in the chest; the shot was fired in the midst of a campaign address by a self-styled patriot who cried out "No Third Term!" John F. Kennedy was still in his first term when he was murdered in November 1963, and the circumstances are still shrouded in mystery. But there was no doubt that he would seek reelection, and was almost certain to win. If we accept that Lee Harvey Oswald was *an* assassin, he may stand as a type of the kind of person who, in a virulent context, cannot bear the contrast between his own obscurity and the dazzling yet not properly "legitimate" figure presented to him as the nation's head. Strong Presidents are "usurpers," dictators. The Buchanans are safe: it is the Lincolns who are shot at, though not until the supreme crisis of their particular administration is over: in periods of national emergency, especially wars, notions of usurpation are perhaps held in abeyance. (The other moment of high danger, to judge from the attacks made on Garfield in 1881 and President-elect Roosevelt in 1933, comes when a chief executive is still new to office, and has therefore not demonstrated any impressive claim to legitimacy.)

"Strong" Presidents, in other words, store up trouble for themselves and for their successors. Even in the second half of the 20th century not all Presidential candidates warm to the idea of executive might. Goldwater did not; nor did Eisenhower. Congress still resists the aggrandizing Presidential style. After the mid-term elections of 1966 one Democratic Congressman proclaimed: "We've had our bellyful of new legislation. The pendulum has swung too far in the direction of the White House, and now it's time for it to swing back. This will be a people's Congress." A republican colleague said much the same. "It's going to be rough going for [Johnson] around here. Congress will write the laws, not the executive branch." And the general public, except for hallucinatory intervals, shares the Congressional suspicion of overweening executive claims.

At this point the reader may complain that such assertions are of no help. They are not even original; every book on the development of the Presidency mentions the schemes of reformers like Lockwood. What is the use of repining at an evolution which has occurred in the nature of things? Of what relevance are the affairs of Switzerland? Every large country in the modern world is headed by a single executive. Government by committee is no-government. No scheme is without its drawbacks. The prices to be paid for the American scheme of federal government may be cheap in comparison with the alternatives. What genuine alternatives *are* there? Why seek to revive the ancient "Whig" or the anachronistic "Republican" conceptions of the Presidency?

The answer is that some of these old conceptions still possess vitality: in fact, have acquired new vitality. Like the states'-rights view of governmental functions, they are a good deal better than some of the men who have professed them. The Presidency works badly. Among other things it embraces a paradox. The President has at once too much prestige and—in domestic affairs—not enough real executive leeway. His frustrations match those of his countrymen. In the sphere of foreign policy he and the executive branch possess too much capacity to commit the nation to disaster. Liberal advocates of an aggrandizing Presidency now sense uneasily that they have created a Frankenstein: an executive which, in the name of leadership and patriotism, may respond to the demand for spectacular Presidential direction by acting in the only untrammeled way open to it—belligerently.

PERHAPS SOMETHING is to be learned after all from the misgivings of 19th-century American liberals, and from the plethora of plans for executive reorganization. Most of them call for a diminution of the apparent independence of the chief executive. Most of them propose to accomplish this by associating the President more closely with his cabinet and with Congress. A minor but surely sensible proposal, recommended by President Johnson in his January 1966 message to Congress, aimed at overcoming the parochialism and the separateness of the legislature, is to provide a four-year term for members of the House of Representatives. A more comprehensive reform, advocated by Herman Finer in *The Presidency: Crisis and Regeneration* (1960) would be to have all executive heads and members of Congress elected simultaneously for a four-year period. The executive branch would consist of a President and eleven vice-presidents, who must be past or present members of Congress. These twelve men would act as a cabinet, with collective responsibility for executive decisions, instead of the existing principle that "the President alone is responsible and that his convictions are to dominate the administration." Finer thinks that under his scheme Congress would at last become a genuinely national legislative body, ceasing to be merely "a congeries of local interests," and that the majority party would be truly in accord with the party executive. At present, as James M. Burns has argued in *The Deadlock of Democracy* (1963), there is an intolerable gulf between the executive and legislative party wings.

The details of Finer's and other suggestions are open to debate. Or rather they ought to be. At the moment there is precious little sign of interest in the deficiencies of the federal government. Senator Fulbright's *The Arrogance of Power* is an honorable exception, which has not received the at-

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tention it deserves. Ought not liberals to follow his example and address themselves to the task? There are many straws in the wind, signs of a possible profound realignment. There could well now be a retreat from the prevailing assumption that the United States has a universal, messianic involvement in every corner of the globe. The retreat might turn into a new wave of sour isolationism. With guidance it might be diverted into a wholly desirable drawing-in of horns, resulting in a more modest, more legislatively responsible executive demeanor. There are signs too, all over the world, of an astonishing recovery of local spirit, which differs from raw, new nationalism. The activities of French Canada, of Flemish Belgium, of lively separatist movements in Wales and Scotland, indicate a widespread revolt against distant bureaucratic authority and grandiose governmental edicts. The United States too might be a better place if the federal government with its overpublicized White House functioned with more decentralization. Perhaps the need is to take away the still-valid arguments from the Southern states-righters and the reactionaries, and refurbish them as weapons in the liberal arsenal.

The effort is as difficult as it is urgent. The federal government is bound to remain rich, multifarious, and powerful; and no liberal would wish it to relinquish the question of race relations to the white supremacists of the deep South, while they continue to act so odiously. The President will still be an equivocal figure, so long as he remains both head of state and head of government. To avoid this disquieting duality it would be necessary to separate the respective roles and entrust them to *two* men. In his early book *Congressional Government,* Woodrow Wilson implied that the governmental function was already more or less in the hands of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Given the general caliber of 20th-century Speakers, that is not a prospect to enthuse over.

But the difficulties are not insuperable. The federal government can attempt a greater degree of devolution by making (or withholding) financial grants to the individual states. Any reform which links the President more organically with his cabinet and with Congress is a move in the right direction. There is no suggestion that the nation can afford candidates who are morally and intellectually "weak." On the contrary, there is a greater need than ever for candidates of exceptional quality. It is a dismal comment on the United States that its present batch of 1968 runners is so generally conventional and mediocre. If the President were genuinely *primus inter pares,* instead of being elevated to an impossible regality, the nation would have a richer, wider range of possible incumbents from which to choose. The slogan for liberals—by which I mean the several million responsible, articulate Americans who want a decent future for their countrymen and for mankind—should be that politics are too important to leave to the politicians. But there are liberal no less than reactionary clichés; and at the moment some of the apparent reactionaries may be saying the right things, if for the wrong reasons.

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The McCarthy Candidacy

Andrew Hacker

IT IS ONLY recently that I have stopped doing a double-take upon encountering lapel-buttons emblazoned "McCarthy." For my generation, that surname still has only one enduring meaning, and the new rise of a McCarthy-for-President movement inevitably stirs up old associations. Nevertheless, it is in order to ask whether Senator Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota is actually running for the Presidency—or at least for a Presidential nomination.

The cold fact is that he must be regarded as a candidate. This is so if only because he has chosen to make a bid for both primary votes and convention delegates, intending to take them away from an incumbent President who gives every indication of wanting another term in the White House. To be sure, the primary path is also an excellent public platform. It gets better springtime coverage than do speeches on the Senate floor, and anyway that forum on Vietnam has been pretty well pre-empted by William Fulbright and Wayne Morse, along with the periodic Republicans who wobble over to the dovecotes from time to time.

Yet it is not often that the Presidential primaries are used as a vehicle for presenting an alternative line of policy, especially in the foreign area. Most contenders enter them simply as office-seekers, keeping their personal positions ambiguous. Hence the emphasis on individual charm and the avoidance of serious issues. There are, of course, exceptions: the Oregon primary of 1948 saw a debate between Thomas Dewey and Harold Stassen on outlawing the Communist party, and Barry Goldwater made his ideology all too clear in the spring of 1964. But the approach of John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and George Romney is closer to the norm: it is the man who is to be voted on, rather than his ideas.

McCarthy, we are told, will concentrate his campaign on Vietnam. Since it is clear that on domestic matters he is in close agreement with Lyndon Johnson—down to supporting the oil-depletion allowances—his position must be that Democratic voters deserve the opportunity to signify their preference for a Vietnam policy differing from the one now pursued by the administration. ("Party unity," he has argued, "is not a sufficient excuse for silence.") Hence McCarthy's candidacy stands on the premise that he represents a different policy and that primary votes for him will express a variant opinion on the war.

ANDREW HACKER is professor of government at Cornell. He writes frequently about American politics in these pages.

For the past decade McCarthy has been a known, although not a well-known, Senator. He has not made a visible record for himself, partly because he has championed no legislative causes and partly because of his low-keyed personal style. Most usually he has been grouped in the public mind with other freshwater liberals—Bayh of Indiana, Church of Idaho, Metcalf of Montana, Burdick of North Dakota, Proxmire of Wisconsin, and McGee of Wyoming—and until recently he has not stood out on his own.

Indeed, the most frequent term applied to him has been "intelligent," and on this score he certainly ranks in the Senate's top decile. In the Congressional Directory he lists his profession as "college professor," and in fact he taught sociology for several years at St. Thomas College in St. Paul. He is by no means a scholar, not even an intellectual, but he is a literate and witty man—rather like Adlai Stevenson (whom he supported at the 1960 convention) and thus able to bridge the gulf between the worlds of politics and the academy.

There is nothing particularly unique or unusual about McCarthy. Indeed, any one of six or seven other Senators could have proclaimed an anti-administration candidacy and been similarly received. But he was the one who took the plunge, and it is clear that he genuinely cares about the issue on which he has chosen to engage. Last March he came out for repeal of the Tonkin resolution, and it was he who accused Dean Rusk of raising the specter of a "yellow peril." Moreover, he has cut his personal ties with the President ("He's trying to get everyone—the Senate, the Cabinet, the United Nations—to carry the can for him on Vietnam"), which is always a serious step for a Senator. Yet for all this his seems a rather casual courage. His speeches at campuses have been lackluster and disappointing to audiences ready to be stirred by displays of some old-fashioned oratory. But it does not seem to be in the man to raise the rafters.

McCarthy's recent book gives a surprisingly good picture of the mind and manner of the man,* though it is necessary, to get that picture, to do quite a bit of reading between the lines. (The publisher has in this case quite literally provided ample opportunity for that.) Most bound volumes appearing under the names of candidates and congressmen follow a formula. They usually consist of relatively recent speeches, researched and frequently written by their staff members. If

* *The Limits of Power.* Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 238 pp. $5.95.

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they display the "touch" of the putative author, it is because his writers know his style and are aware of the trademarks associated with his career. Politicians do not write speeches or books so much as they rewrite them: they take home their ghost's drafts and pencil in alternative phrases and paragraphs where they feel the "personal" flavor is missing. This is understandable and forgivable. It is impossible to see how public office holders could muster the time to write books of their own.

Thus *The Limits of Power* consists of 238 wide-margined pages, with the text in large enough type to offer generous ribbons of white space between each line. Indeed, 26 of the 238 pages are blank sheets separating the chapters, so I estimate that the reader gets less than 25,000 words for his $5.95, really a pamphlet that could easily have been produced for 75¢. The chapters—which is to say, the speeches—cover such topics as the Defense Department's arms sales, Micronesia, and the CIA. The inclusion of this filler material is also understandable, for every congressman is compelled to come up with some specialties if he is to have any value at all in his chamber. McCarthy does not tell us how he developed his interest in Micronesia—but then again nowhere in the book does he discuss his motives or motivations in a way that could be called self-revealing.

There is, to be sure, no dearth of allusions and citations to remind the reader that the author is a cut above his congressional colleagues. Hence there is a liberal selection in passing of quotations from, or references to, Kafka, Orwell, Toynbee, Burke, Cromwell, and C. S. Lewis. (The Orwell reference, by the way, is not to *Animal Farm* or *1984* but to an essay on political language.) Among a few paragraphs which explain—quite sympathetically—China's territorial claims to Tibet and a revision of the Sino-Indian frontier, the possibly forgetful reader is reminded of the Tibet-Ladakh agreement of 1684 and the Dogra-Ladakh exchange of 1842. Of course, this kind of expertise-dropping is an old political ploy, employed as much by Southern diehards like Sam Ervin as it is by former professors such as McCarthy. So long as one does not make too big a production out of it, a slight show of historical or technical knowledge is a nice way of acknowledging the new level of literacy that has been recently attained by much of the electorate.

In any case, the quality of mind revealed in the book will have to depend on the prior sympathies of the reader. Those already well-disposed to McCarthy will generously discover meanings and perceptions in his words that are not readily apparent to those not so inclined. Let me give an example of such an exercise in interpretation. In a discussion of our military-aid emphasis in Latin Amerca, McCarthy caustically alludes to a group of policy-makers he calls the "tough-minded" liberals. Now, it is altogether true that during the last fifteen to twenty years the liberal community has experienced a real and serious split. While there are various ways to characterize this cleavage, it will suffice here to go along with McCarthy and speak of "tough-minded" as opposed to "soft-minded" liberals. The line of demarcation between the two depends primarily on the degree to which one is inclined to talk about the presumed "realities" of national and international power politics. In the days of an earlier McCarthy, the tough-minded liberal was hard-headed about domestic Communism, given to citing chapter and verse on the infiltration of unions, the filching of documents, and the subversion of classrooms for alien ends. While somewhat different in style, the tough-type intellectuals who joined the Kennedy administration were also prone to speak of the "realities," especially as they made peace with the Pentagon or curried favor with the conservative doyens in Congress. Nevertheless, those who have presided over Johnson's Vietnam policy, from Dean Rusk down to John Roche, still have every honorable claim to full membership in the liberal camp. Perhaps the fact that the term "liberal" has to cover so many people with such varying outlooks and temperaments is an indication of its obsolescence—but until a better one comes along, we are stuck with it. (Let me simply add that the great majority of progressive and middle-class opponents of the Vietnam war are unwilling to engage in the linguistic leap of distinguishing themselves as "radicals.") The importance of all this is that there has been a growing disillusionment over liberal tough-mindedness in the last year or so, accompanied by a spreading distaste for all those knowing references to the purported "realities."

In this connection McCarthy's all-too-brief criticism of "tough-minded liberalism" can be read—at least by those who want to—as his personal confession that he is basically a soft-minded type. What one gets from such a reading is primarily a sense of compassion for the lot of the underdog, whether in the Mississippi or the Mekong Delta. From this vantage point, power is as often as not seen as an instrument of injustice, or at least of indifference, and the preservation of official order need not be accorded the highest priority. But whether or not McCarthy is saying this about himself can only be inferred. He refrains from any analysis of those who preside over his party, and he provides no defense of the soft-minded stance.

And Vietnam? The present volume contains only one short, nine-page chapter, which ends with the recommendation that we "try the Gavin policy" and at the same time attempt direct negotiations with the Vietcong. I suppose this is as much a "policy" as anyone's is: Vietnam is not an area where one can offer detailed programs, largely because the viability of any plan depends on the reaction from the other side. Nonetheless, McCarthy is plainly for "de-escalation" but is hardly a "pull-

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out" proponent. This we all knew and still know. His nine pages add nothing new to our knowledge of his thinking, unless this is all he still has to say on the subject he has chosen for his campaign.

THE CENTRAL theme of the book may be presumed to be stated in its title—*The Limits of Power*. "We have moved," McCarthy says, "to a position of isolated, almost singular responsibility for the whole world. We must therefore attempt to assay our real power as compared with our assumed responsibilities." The key question here is whether McCarthy's acknowledging of the limits of American power signifies his willingness to curtail our global commitments in any profound way. Thinking of that sort has been branded as the "new isolationism" of the Left. But before labels are pinned on any man or movement it is best to examine the implications of the candidate's words.

First of all, there is the factual question of the magnitude of America's "real power." Our population includes more than 16 million young men between the ages of eighteen and thirty, and we have the industrial potential to equip whatever armed forces we raise with more firepower than any other nation of the world. Our gross national product exceeds $700 billion, an amount that is quite sufficient to supply a military machine with all of its needs. Other imperial regimes, in recent times and in the past, have policed or occupied large chunks of the world with armies a fraction the size of the one we could muster. In point of fact, the United States has the physical potential—both human and material—for implementing even greater international commitments than those we have hitherto assumed. In these terms, our power is not at all limited. On the contrary, we have a capability equal to that of Imperial Rome and superior to that of Nazi Germany.

What is missing, of course, is the will. Americans value their private comforts and pleasures, and are unwilling to make the sacrifices that are necessary for the success of imperial ventures. Young men are not volunteering to fight for manifestly destined causes these days, and they and their parents and their parents' politicians are seeking to minimize the impact of conscription. Our citizens look upon their personal incomes as sacred vessels, not to be tapped by the tax-collector for ambitious expenditures on armaments. The private desire for a motorboat or air-conditioning or vacation travel clearly has priority over appropriations for international involvements. Our $700 billion gross national product is largely earmarked for personal amenities and hence is not available for public outlays. Thus to say that our power is "limited" is really to admit that the citizens of America are unwilling to devote more than a minor fraction of their population or their prosperity to the enterprise of empire. And when McCarthy asks that we "assay our real power," he is actually asking that we examine the nation's will to act as a nation. Needless to say, he does not —and here he differs from Fulbright—plumb the implications of this question. Were he to do so he might well be compelled to conclude that the public spirit of the American people is so decayed that they are not worth trying to lead.

"America's contribution to world civilization must be more than a continuous performance demonstration that we can police the planet," are the concluding words of *The Limits of Power*. Yet if our "real power" is as limited as the candidate has suggested, then it is apparent that the United States is in no position to police any planet. After all Vietnam, North and South together, is smaller than the state of Montana, and with the might we have been willing to muster we have hardly demonstrated our ability to impose our will on that sliver of the globe. Given this, it is proper to ask just what this country's "contribution to world civilization" might be.

A partial answer might be adduced from McCarthy's speeches on Latin America, Africa, and Asia, which show that he is committed to the liberal conventions of technical assistance, economic aid, land reform, and support for budding or blossoming aspirations of national independence. It is the school of thought that would send tractors to Tanzania, engineers to Ecuador, and medicines to the Maldive Islanders. Whether such activity earns us respect or prestige or love or goodwill, or whether it simply makes life a little bit better for some of our fellow human beings, what emerges is a wish to share some of our blessings with other people in other lands. This is a contribution that America could make to the world, and anyone who espouses such a cause is certainly not an isolationist.

However, if American military power is limited by a lack of will, the country's ability to part with any but a token fraction of its material bounty is constricted by the very same deficiency. Every American, from Providence to Pasadena, has a long personal shopping-list of goods and goodies he has not yet bought. The central fact preventing the expansion of McCarthy-type foreign aid programs is that 40 million households in this country do not yet have color television sets. (And when they do get them, the chief obstacle will be that they do not have a cabin on the lake or a cottage by the shore.) While I realize that McCarthy is not writing a treatise on the political—or the anti-political—psychology of the American people, his incantations about a non-military "contribution to world civilization" remain ritualistic until he is prepared to estimate the resources that we as a population are willing to deploy beyond our shores. (The same stricture obviously applies to all the current talk of "massive" governmental aid to our own ghettos.)

Yet to show that there is little evidence of hard thought in McCarthy's book may really be beside the point. For as the McCarthy movement takes on speed and momentum it will begin to display

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the tendencies inherent in all candidacies. As a campaign grows, so do the self-delusions which come to cloud the perceptions of those who made the decision to back the man. The procedure is to conjure up an idealized picture of a candidate and then to project that image onto one's chosen standard-bearer. As a result, a candidate's followers choose to see only those facets of their leader which do not run counter to their preferred conception of him. Such self-delusions are inevitable accompaniments to electoral politics, for only by holding such a prismatic view can we muster the energy and élan to work for, talk up, and contribute to our candidate. All of us have distorted reality in this way on one occasion or another, whether the object of our affections has been Adlai Stevenson or Barry Goldwater or Richard Nixon. Even the august and Olympian Walter Lippmann has willed himself to see his own outlook embodied in McCarthy: "The mission of Senator McCarthy is . . . to stop the rot in the American political system. His chief assets are his own profoundly educated belief in the American idea and the sincerity and purity of his motives." If a Lippmann can perceive all this in the Minnesota senator, then it is quite in the cards that others who have not made a profession of political commentary will soon follow suit.

TO FOLLOW WHAT will be happening over the next six or seven months, it is necessary to say something about the labyrinth McCarthy is entering. Whether or not he is a "serious" candidate for the nomination, his presence in the primaries will inevitably have its effect on the Democratic convention this coming summer. It is true that to establishment eyes the Minnesota Senator is an unwanted intruder at what should normally be the ritual re-anointment of an incumbent President. But this is not the first time a troublemaker has appeared on the electoral scene, and it would be well to consider how some other outsiders have been dealt with in the past.

For all that is said and written about the primaries, very little is actually understood about this presumed path to the Presidential nomination. In hard fact, only fifteen states out of the fifty use the primary method of delegate-selection. The other thirty-five rely on closed conventions of party loyalists who select delegates—often from their own number—not publicly committed to any candidate. Out of the approximately twenty-six hundred delegates who will be at the Democratic convention next August, only nine hundred or so will have been sent there via the primary route.

Yet fifteen out of fifty is by no means the whole story. Some primaries—such as New York's and Alabama's—are virtually meaningless simply because those running for delegate do not usually indicate which candidate they support. The delegations from Pennsylvania and Illinois have tended toward single uncontested slates, uncommitted to any particular contender, which is why these large and important states seldom figure in the primary plans of leading aspirants. The remaining eleven states can have meaningful contests where two or more competing slates, each identified with a candidate, are on the primary ballot. However it is to be noted that the victorious delegates in these states are usually committed to support their standard-bearer only on the opening ballot of the convention. After that they become free agents.

To complicate matters even further, there are the "preference polls" which accompany the delegate contests in about a dozen states. The trouble here is that these polls are on separate parts of the ballot and in most cases bear no direct relation to the process of delegate-selection. Thus there have been candidates who have won the popularity polls, only to find that none of those states' delegates were committed to them. Moreover, the polls are only advisory in most places, and as often as not a state's delegates will pay little heed to them when they reach the convention floor.

All this can best be illustrated by the case of the late Estes Kefauver, who used the primaries in a serious attempt to gain the Democratic nomination in 1952. The Tennessee Senator, concealing a Yale Law School education beneath his coonskin hat, entered no fewer than twelve primaries. He was apparently the choice of a fair number of rank-and-file Democrats, for he won the preference polls in such states as Illinois, Massachusetts, and New Jersey. However the vagaries of the system were (and still are) such that not a single one of the 117 delegates from those states entered the convention pledged to him. For all his efforts in the primaries, Kefauver got only 174 out of the 1,230 delegates by that means. On the convention's first ballot he was the frontrunner in a field with five principal contenders, but by the third ballot he had slipped behind Adlai Stevenson who pulled ahead to win the nomination.

While it was true that Kefauver was for various reasons "unacceptable" to most of those who led and comprised the convention, it is also not easy to argue that he was the people's choice. When all is said and done, he won preference polls in only five states and of the 581 delegates chosen by primaries in that year, he managed to get only 174 pledged to him. All one can conclude is that given the obduracy of the primary system it is not really possible for anyone who enters that maze to emerge as a clearcut and popular choice for the nomination. Too many of the contests are pseudo-primaries with either a single uncontested slate or an outcome which leaves the delegates uncommitted. And given the disconnection between the preference polls and the process of delegate-selection, victory in the former can have a meaningful impact only if an atmosphere has been created which suggests that the winner is somehow unstoppable. Kefauver was never able to parlay his preference-poll wins into such a bandwagon.

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Dwight Eisenhower and John Kennedy did manage to pull this off. Can McCarthy?

But Eisenhower and Kennedy were not trying to wrest the nomination from an incumbent President of their own party. To find an instance of such *hubris* (or *chutzpah*) on the hustings one must go back more than half a century.

Theodore Roosevelt had voluntarily retired from the White House in 1908, naming William Howard Taft as his candidate for the succession. While Taft won that election easily, T.R. did not take to private life, and he soon grew disillusioned with his former lieutenant. ("There stands Taft like the statue of Louis XV in the Tuileries Gardens, smiling and formidable, but without heart or guts.") After some tergiversations Roosevelt decided to take the 1912 nomination from Taft.

Even though Taft was not a particularly popular President, Republican regulars across the country had a vested interest in his re-election. So Roosevelt entered the primaries, which were new institutions in most of the states that had them and which had never before been used as the vehicle for a serious challenge on a national basis. Indeed, the legislatures of four states—Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland—authorized primaries for the first time in 1912, largely to give T.R. a chance. He easily defeated Taft in those states and went on to beat him in Kansas, Maine, Nebraska, Washington, Oregon, and California.

But Taft did not pull out of the race. Like all insiders he placed his confidence in the convention, with its majority of non-primary delegates. That Chicago meeting was probably the most exciting and eventful the Republican party has had. Elihu Root, a Taft man, won the chairmanship by a hairline vote of 558-551. A ballot on the controversial credentials of the California delegation went to the Taft forces, but by a cliffhanging 542-529. And the first ballot for the nomination ended with 561 votes for Taft (a bare majority of the 1,078 delegates)—and only 107 for Roosevelt. Of the remaining delegates, 66 were strewn among minor candidates and, most critical, 344 abstained.

As is well known, the Roosevelt supporters—most of whom were the abstainers—went home and set up T.R.'s Progressive party candidacy, with the result that Woodrow Wilson won the 1912 Presidency with 42 per cent of the votes.

IF HISTORY is in any way to repeat itself, the 1912 analogy is not entirely farfetched. Like any attempt to draw a parallel, it is far from perfect: Eugene McCarthy is not a renowned former President, nor even the brother of a renowned former President. But the point is that even so well-known and popular a contender as Theodore Roosevelt could not carry a convention. And there is every reason to believe that the great majority of this year's Democratic delegates will be much the same sort of people as those who renominated Taft in the same city fifty-six years ago.

The typical delegate is not only not chosen or pledged by a primary, but he is a local party loyalist. Most are year-round county committeemen, quite senior in service, and accustomed to going along with the leadership. Very few, especially among the Democrats, have opinions that are in any way ideological and quite a few have no opinions at all on national issues. Put a dozen of any state's delegates in a room and it would be like pulling teeth to get a discussion going on the merits or demerits of our Vietnam involvement. Nor are they, for that matter, particularly attuned to what passes as "public opinion." Certainly they felt no compunctions about failing to nominate either Kefauver or Theodore Roosevelt despite their impressive strings of primary victories. Indeed, even in 1968 it will be difficult to find dissident or dovish Democratic governors or congressmen making any attempt to lead delegations away from Johnson. Frank Church and William Fulbright, for example, will probably not even try to steer the Idaho and Arkansas delegates toward McCarthy. If there is to be a challenge at all, it will come from Robert Kennedy, yet even here it is by no means certain how much of a hold he will have over New York's 190-odd delegates.

What I am saying, of course, is that all current signs indicate that it will be a convention loyal to Lyndon Johnson. The McCarthy strategy—if such exists—must be to prevent anyone from getting a majority on the first ballot. If that unlikely feat were to be achieved, then the prevailing presumption is that Robert Kennedy would step before the divided delegates and rally both McCarthy and Johnson supporters behind him. (Hence all the "stalking horse" talk.) Yet I cannot for the life of me see this happening. I am willing to wager that Johnson will carry the opening ballot with two-thirds to three-quarters of the votes. And I base this guess more on my understanding of the sort of people convention delegates are than on particular currents of opinion running among Democratic voters in the country.

A Johnson nomination may well be yet another sign of the isolation of the established party system from the political sentiments held by substantial numbers of Americans. Not the least reason for this alienation is that the ongoing party organizations remain in the fairly firm grip of an in-group which is extremely difficult either to influence or to dislodge. While "hack" is not quite the appropriate term for most of the members of this group, they understandably have little sympathy for the opinionated amateurs who only turn out when the glamor-contests are on. Certainly, to expect these people to become exercised over the morality of the Vietnam war is asking too much. (Recent surveys of Democratic state committeemen have shown them almost unanimously behind the administration.) What this means is that those who are exercised will have to fight their battle on the fringes of the established party system. And

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this, needless to say, is just where the McCarthy candidacy is taking place. In the best of political worlds it might be possible for the parties to reflect and incorporate the most pressing issues of the day in their candidates and platforms. This, however, seldom happens, and when it does—as with the Bryan and Goldwater nominations of 1896 and 1964—the result is that the other party wins. We do not, then, have a really "open" political system. It is smug and stolid and well guarded by those who got into it first.

Perhaps this is an overlong way of saying that the McCarthy candidacy is not a candidate's campaign at all. It is, rather, a referendum on Vietnam. Several million registered Democrats in selected states will be able to go to the polls this spring and register their opinions on the war. They can voice a generalized anti-war sentiment by casting their ballots for McCarthy, or they can approve the continuation of current policy by voting for Johnson or some local stand-in for him. The sample will probably consist of Democratic voters in Wisconsin, Oregon, California, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Nebraska, and my estimate is that the total turnout for these primaries will not exceed six million. Still, it is not a bad distribution for a referendum: two Eastern states, one each in the Midwest and the Plains, and two on the West Coast. Moreover, six million is about one-seventh of Johnson's poll in 1964.

Yet what will a vote for McCarthy mean? Clearly it would not be a ballot for or against an immediate or even an early pull-out of Vietnam. However, when the issue was so put in San Francisco and Cambridge last fall, 37 and 39 per cent of those voting in the referendums held in those two cities favored withdrawal. Presumably, one could draw up a scale representing degrees or intensities of anti-war sentiment, ranging from those who are pro-Vietcong to those sharing the moderate misgivings of a Mike Mansfield, and then chart the rising percentages who would support positions as they got less "extreme." But while the result might serve as a model for social scientists, the fuzzy reality is not so easily pinned down on a chart. Moreover, in this case the reality is not even Eugene McCarthy himself but rather the image he presents to the voters he wishes to court.

JUST HOW LARGE the movement will become in terms of sheer numbers it is impossible to estimate. There are already several organizations supporting McCarthy—Dissenting Democrats, Coalition for a Democratic Alternative, and the Conference of Concerned Democrats—and they can easily gather the tens of thousands of signatures needed for petitions, advertisements, and mailing lists. But while such luminaries as George Kennan and Robert Vaughn have lent their names to McCarthy's cause, hardly a single Democratic officeholder has allowed himself to be listed. Even such Senate doves as Wayne Morse, George McGovern, Stephen Young, and Gaylord Nelson are playing it safe and remaining studiously neutral. Robert Kennedy clearly does not even want to be asked where he stands.

It will, then, be up to the amateurs. The movement will certainly not lack for money, for it is heavily endowed with wealthy and upper-middle-class liberals who are habituated to writing $100 to $1000 checks. Add to this the $10 and $20 donations of college professors, schoolteachers, dentists, social workers, librarians, and publishing and advertising executives, and McCarthy will enter his primaries with several million dollars for billboards, bumper stickers, and television time.

The overriding question, of course, is how many of these Democrats there are in the actual states where McCarthy will campaign. The workers in a single Allis-Chalmers plant in Milwaukee have more votes than the entire University of Wisconsin faculty in Madison, and there are many more aerospace draftsmen in Orange County than there are intellectuals in San Francisco. Thus McCarthy's Vietnam referendums will only approach the tipping-point if his movement begins to make contact with Democrats not blessed with upper-middle-class incomes or educations. The Massachusetts and California electorates are far more varied than those of enclaves like Cambridge and Berkeley, and there is a paucity of real knowledge about how to phrase the anti-war case to people who have been thinking in terms like "supporting our boys."

Wide note was made of the fact that at Chicago's year-end meeting of the Conference of Concerned Democrats (where McCarthy issued only the most general of calls for an "honorable, rational, and political solution" in Vietnam) there were hardly any Negroes or union representatives on hand. Thus the real challenge will be how much anti-administration sentiment can be roused among lower-middle, working-class, and even lower-class Democrats. For these classes do not vote in party primaries in overwhelming numbers, and they do not normally have critical feelings on foreign policy issues (although when they do it is, as with the AFL-CIO, as often as not on the side of purblind patriotism). The McCarthy campaign will have a lot of class lines to penetrate and many suspicions to allay. Even the presence of Dr. Spock and other portside voices in McCarthy's camp may lose him fewer votes than will the surfeit of sophistication among its mainstream members.

Ironically, the chief impact of McCarthy's candidacy may be to deflect attention from what would normally be the springtime's first order of political business: the Republican party's primaries. This could be an unfortunate result, for the man who carries those contests may well turn out to be the occupant of the White House in January of 1969, and to his hands would fall the decisions of peace and war which seem to exercise the Democratic party far more than they do his own.

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Boaz and the Israelites
A Story

Dan Jacobson

I MET BOAZ, the Israelite, at a time when I was doing nothing. I was idle, stagnant, dead still.

This was just after my twentieth birthday, when I should have been at my most energetic, restless, and ambitious. Or so I used to tell myself. Instead, I was stuck fast, as if forever, in my hometown, Lyndhurst, in South Africa. Not long before I had excitedly made my plans to go to Europe, to go to Israel, to travel as far as I could into the waiting world. But having had to cancel those plans just a few days before I had been due to leave, I remained at home, like someone in a thrall, unable to move, without sufficient energy even to want to do so.

I suppose I'm exaggerating a little when I say that I was doing nothing. There were three things which I did regularly, and which could possibly be called work. At least they were activities of a kind. I went to the hospital every day to visit my father. I took Hebrew lessons three times a week. I went once a week to the farm my father owned, to deliver rations to the "boys" and to count the sheep.

II

THE SHEEP-COUNTING was something of a farce. Have you ever tried to count a flock of two hundred-odd sheep being driven in a cloud of dust from one *kraal* to another adjacent to it, through a narrow gate? Tried without being practiced at it, I mean? I was town-born and bred (small town, admittedly, but town nevertheless); I had just spent three years at the university in Johannesburg; I was no farmboy, no cattleman, no shepherd.

Driven by two diminutive, barefooted herdboys, who waved large sticks over their heads and yelled fiercely in Tswana and Afrikaans, the sheep milled together, ran in every direction, bleated furiously, and came running in bunches through the gate, where I stood with Piet, the herdboys' father, each of us to one side. We counted them as they ran, their woolly coats quivering, their eyes ablaze with terror, their foolish, triangular mouths open. The dust they raised in the air was green and acrid, made of the dung they had dropped on previous occasions.

Invariably, at the end of each counting there was a discrepancy between the figure I had arrived at and the figure given to me by Piet. Invariably, my figure was somewhat lower than his. Each of us having announced his figure, an embarrassed pause would follow.

A question hung unspoken in that silence: Was Piet stealing the sheep? It was a question I found impossible to answer. If I was right one week in finding the total to be two hundred and twenty-five, say, then surely I was wrong the next week in finding it to be two hundred and forty-five. Or was I? What was there to stop Piet, after a larger than usual depredation, from insinuating ten or twenty of his own sheep into my father's flock when the time came for them to be counted? For he did have a small flock of his own, of which he was a most attentive keeper, about which he bargained and bickered and came to obscure arrangements with Africans on neighboring farms. I couldn't tell his sheep from any other; they were all the same black-headed Persian type, with dusty off-white bodies; none had been branded or dyed distinctively.

Piet was gentle with me, but unyielding. He would clear his throat, breaking the silence between us; he would gesture soothingly with the hand that clutched the bowl of the small, unlit pipe he almost invariably carried. He was a slight, untalkative, middle-aged man, with a mouth pursed forward in an expression of melancholy, dogged doubt; around his mouth, on both sides, there ran two deep wrinkles, like a pair of elongated parentheses. He looked reflective, skeptical, and somehow urban; his face might have been that of a lawyer, or a petty shopkeeper perhaps, a seller of stationery and stamps. But he was a shepherd, nothing more, and his clothes were almost as ragged as those of his children. His shirt was a mere accumulation of patches; his shoes were so hard, large, and cracked, they might have been made of unseasoned timber. I was pretty sure he

DAN JACOBSON, the English novelist, is a regular contributor. Mr. Jacobson's most recent novel, *The Beginners*, was published in 1966 by Macmillan.

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put on those shoes only in honor of my visits, and went around barefoot the rest of the time. On his head he wore a brown woolen cap with an implausible pompom.

"Nee, my baas," he might say. *"Twee honderd drie en dertig."*

Two hundred and thirty-three. He had counted them, and that was his total. I had counted and got two hundred and twenty-seven. So this week the discrepancy was only six. Last week it had been nineteen. The week before it had been fourteen. What was the truth? Would I never know it? What was I going to do now?

I did what I always did: I stared hard at Piet, who met my gaze with a look of dutiful, dignified submission. Pouting, head drooping, pompom hanging forward, he waited for me to pronounce judgment. Sometimes I said we should count the sheep all over again, which we would do amid renewed dust and confusion, with results as unsatisfactory as before. More often I said that we would count them more carefully, more slowly, next time. Then we would leave, while the sheep, still protesting, would be driven out of the *kraal* and down the slope to the grazing lands.

They had more than three thousand acres to graze in, those sheep. Three thousand acres of pale grass, stunted black camelthorn trees, and innumerable nipple-shaped, knee-high antheaps of dried earth; the whole area being divided by wire fences into "camps," with an iron windmill and an iron watertank in each one. You could see every windmill and tank, you could see all three thousand acres, and God knows how many hundreds of thousands of acres beyond—belonging to Pope, to Van Aswegan, to Huyssteen, to Jaap Burger, to the Lyndhurst General Mining & Exploration Company—from the farmhouse where I always parked the car. Behind the farmhouse there was a ridge of *koppies*, and the slight elevation on which the house stood was enough to give a view that stretched all the way I had come. The only irregularity on the horizon were the mine-dumps of Lyndhurst, sixteen miles away. From there the white dirt road ran through one farm after another; past the ridge behind the farmhouse it was lost to sight. Out of curiosity I had once followed it beyond the farm, and had found that it arrived eventually at a miserable, shadeless huddle of iron-roofed buildings called Platkop, thirty miles further on.

It was called, for some reason, the Samarian Road. Why Samarian? What had it to do with Samaria? None of the farms along its route was named Samaria, so far as I knew.

Anyway, that was the road, that was the view, from the sagging wire fence that separated the sand of the veld from the sand of the farmhouse "garden." The house itself was a low, iron-roofed building, whitewashed inside and out, divided into four small rooms. The only item of furniture still in it was a hat-stand. A real, elaborate, varnished hat-stand, with fierce antlers for hats arching out of a kind of node near the top, and two rings of wood around its lower half, to contain umbrellas. Umbrellas? In that climate? I used to go into the house to see that everything was in order. "Everything" was invariably "in order," though I found every time I went in that more whitewash had flaked from the walls and that more and more insects appeared to be occupying the place. Black and yellow striped hornets made their nests plumb against the walls, spiders spun their webs in corners, ants hoarded their food in nests between floorboards. Overhead, between the iron roof and the buckled beaverboard ceiling, I could heard faint scurryings and crepitations—birds, perhaps, or mice, were nesting there.

EVERYTHING, I repeat, was in order. The only disorder, the only visible movement in the house was that of the motes of dust that swarmed and twinkled in columns of sunlight coming in through the windows. The walls sent off a cloud of white dust if I struck them with the palms of my hands, and I often did it, partly for the sake of seeing the dust fly, and partly for the sake of the flat, echoless sound, where no other sound was. Then I would go out. The veld always surprised me, when I came out: the house was so cramped and meager, the veld so very large. Yet in point of life there didn't seem to be all that much to choose between them.

But, waiting around the car, would be Piet and his family, and Kagisho and his family. Kagisho, the other "boy," Piet's assistant, was many years older than Piet; he was bent, frail, and Bushman-like in appearance, with a skin that had a queer reddish or golden tint. Around them sprawled, squatted, and slept their many children. I say slept because that's what the youngest children were doing, slung in fringed shawls on their mothers' backs. I would have thought both women to have passed the childbearing age; but they obviously had not. For that matter, I would have thought Kagisho to be beyond the child-propagating age. But perhaps he had handed his wife over to Piet with the same alacrity he showed when I once heard Piet ask him to hand over the pay I had just given him.

I paid Piet and Kagisho once a month; every week each family was given so much mealie meal, so much sugar, so much tea, so much tobacco. In addition I sometimes off-loaded salt or sulphur or bonemeal for the sheep. Whether or not the sheep ever got these rations I do not know. And there were usually one or two other items that Piet had asked me to get the previous week—a bottle of cough mixture for one of his children, or some kaffircorn malt which he used to brew his own beer. I always brought the children packets of barley-sugar, which each came up in turn to receive, in cupped hands. They thanked me formally for these. Once when one of them forgot to do

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so he was reminded by Piet, who sent the delinquent tumbling with a single, savage blow across the back of the head.

So my "work" on the farm would be over. I'd tell Piet to expect me at the same time the next week, and get into the car. The women would smile and bob their heads, hands clutching their long skirts; the children would wave; Piet would send *groete*—greetings—to the *oubaas*—my father; Kagisho, who was always both industrious and ineffectual in the off-loading, would give a sudden start as though he too feared a blow from Piet, and hastily send his *groete*, as well, to the *oubaas*. Somewhere along the road I'd pass the sheep on the way to the particular camp they were grazing in, and I'd wave to the solitary boy herding them. And so, home.

There were just two ways of going home: one was very fast, the other very slow. It was purely a matter of mood which way I did the journey; it never made a difference to anyone else. I had no appointments to keep. When I traveled fast, my ambition was to cover the sixteen miles between the farm and town in fifteen minutes. This was not at all easy to do, on an ill-kept, corrugated dirt road, which curved zealously around every clump of thornbushes, and which was interrupted at least half-a-dozen times by narrow cattle-grids. Many of the curves were almost blind, where the thornbushes grew particularly thickly, and all of them were made trickier by the drifts of sand at their sides. I had some narrow escapes on that road, and so did the oncoming motorists I sometimes found myself confronting in a cloud of dust, to the sound of blaring, astonished horns and skidding tires.

When I went slowly I'd drive as slowly as I could in top gear, until the car began to stall, then I'd change down into second and do the same; then the same in first. I'd accelerate to seventy miles an hour, switch off the ignition, and see how far the car would go before coming to a halt. I would turn the car round so that she faced the farm again, put it into reverse, and drive backwards for a couple of miles. Many times I simply stopped the car at the side of the road, walked a little way into the veld, and lay down on the sand and tufts of grass, shielding my eyes from the sun and looking straight up into the blue sky until it swam with a multitude of tiny, squirming shapes that were dark and bright at the same time. Or I stared at a particular thornbush, trying to impress it so firmly on my mind that I would be able to visualize it in every detail an hour later, when I would be back in Lyndhurst. But I found that usually it was something nearby that I hadn't been concentrating on, seeing only out of the corner of my eye, which I would really remember: the knobbly, hard surface of an antheap, or a particular tuft of grass, or the bland, flat face of a locust, its eyes like tiny beads pasted on, which had jumped on to my trouser leg.

I was seldom disturbed by anything other than insects. A car, or some solitary African on foot or on a bicycle, might pass on the road; I daresay they were curious about the empty car standing on the roadside, but insufficiently so ever to come and look for me. I was on my own, surrounded by a flat, blank vacancy of sky and veld, a world of pale colors and strong light. It was abysmally dull, null, motionless, limitless, meaningless.

Eventually I would drive on to meet the main tarred road, where the view opened out on the town itself: low iron roofs, which always looked black in the strong sunlight; a group of taller buildings in the town center, also black; some trees, the same; mine dumps of green sand in a rough circle around the entire scatter of the place. I used to skirt the town, going home along a by-pass road which had pairs of tram-tracks running parallel to it for some distance, before they branched off into the veld, making for no visible destination at all. Poles, no longer carrying cables, arched over the tracks. God knows when they had been laid down, and with what expectations. The expectations had clearly not been fulfilled, but the tracks and poles still marched bravely and aimlessly across the bare veld, under the wide sky.

III

So much for my "work" on the farm. As for the Hebrew lessons. . . .

All the attempts that had been made in my childhood to teach me Hebrew had ended in failure. I had been determined that they should. For obvious reasons. I had associated the Hebrew language with being alien, set apart, exposed; implicated in what I was convinced at an early age was a continuing, unendurable history of suffering and impotence; involved with a religion in whose rituals I could find no grace, no power, no meaning, and that had no connection I could discern with the dusty, modern mining town in South Africa in which I was growing up. I can still remember how intensely I hated the very pictures in the books from which we had been taught Hebrew. They were old books, who knew how old, and the pictures in them were ugly, small, cramped, full of thick black lines. The boys who appeared in the pictures were physically puny, dressed in skullcaps, long jackets, and grotesque knickerbockers; they had earlocks hanging from their temples; they were imprisoned in rooms that looked both over-furnished and poverty-stricken; they sat in devout, learning postures, receiving instruction from bearded rabbis or winding their phylacteries around their arms. I cannot describe the claustrophobia, the anguish of embarrassment and distaste, they roused in me. Was I learning Hebrew to become like one of those boys? Was that the prize? I would sooner have died.

So I hadn't learned much more than the script and a handful of words and constructions in all

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the years I attended, or failed to attend, the classes conducted in the synagogue-hall by Mr. Saltzmann, the local community's ritual slaughterer, ritual circumcizer, and instructor to the youth. I had never learned to understand the prayers that I heard sung, muttered, or sighed in the synagogue. I had never read any of the volumes in Hebrew that filled the bottom row of the big bookcase in our living room: the Bible and commentaries on the Bible, the works of Yehuda Halevi and Ibn Gabirol, the collected poems of moderns like Bialik and Tchernichowsky, a translation of Graetz's *History* in four volumes. Those books, imposingly bound in imitation leather, and in a peculiarly hairy green cloth, and in multicolored marbled boards, were my parents', never mine.

Yet—or hence—here I was, a Zionist now, learning Hebrew once again. And what was more, learning it from the same Mr. Saltzmann who had tried so hard to teach it to me in my childhood. Three times a week we sat at the big table in the dining room, surrounded by sideboards with mahogany roses worked all over them, mirrors in heavy mahogany frames, a clock in a glass and mahogany case five feet tall and complete with a pendulum, which unfortunately did not work. When we looked up from our books we stared into an elaborate marble fireplace, and a mantel that incorporated a melancholy lithograph of three sheepdogs in a hut somewhere in Scotland. One could tell that the hut was in Scotland because the largest of the dogs was standing guard over a plaid and a tam o'shanter, presumably the property of the shepherd, who was nowhere to be seen. His absence, I might say, lent a touch of drama to the picture which it otherwise sadly lacked.

Inevitably, in these surroundings, so intimately familiar to me that in recollection they seem to belong to an inner world of dream rather than to any external world of fact, I got to know Mr. Saltzman far better than I ever had as a child. With his bitten nails, his lined brow, his shoulders of unequal height, his unexpectedly strong head of wavy, silver hair, his pallid skin, he looked exactly as he had years before. Then I had thought of him only as a threat and a bore; now I came to know him as an assiduous reader of newspapers, as a rather dissatisfied husband and family man, as a small-scale speculator in real estate, as an enthusiast for certain finer points of Hebrew grammar. We discusséd, in a desultory, subdued way, such topics as the meaning of life, the prospects of an after-life, the future of the State of Israel, and the relation between science and religion. On all these subjects I thought Mr. Saltzmann surprisingly cautious, in view of the position he held in the community. He did not seem to know just where he stood. Yet I did not feel it would have been right to accuse him of insincerity when he led the prayers in synagogue, or when he cut the throats of chickens, cattle, and sheep in the ritually prescribed manner. Far from it. In holding fast to his orthodoxy Mr. Saltzmann seemed to me as sincere and singleminded about what he was doing as a man washed overboard in the middle of the ocean would be in clutching at a spar. If you were to be so heartless as to ask such a man if he "believed" in his spar, you would get the same kind of answer that Mr. Saltzmann gave to me. What else was there? Why throw it away? Who can be so choosy?

But we didn't spend all our time in conversation; we did pay some attention to our books. The book we used chiefly had been published by the Zionist Organization of America, and was as modern and secular as it possibly could have been. In simple Hebrew it described the adventures of the family Cohen, who sailed one day on a ship to Palestine, and who were so enchanted by everything they saw that they decided to settle there without further ado. On the whole these Cohens were a devoted but charmless family, easily excited into fits of enthusiasm and much given to explaining things to one another. By the end of the book I was up to everything they did and said; I understood their laborious conversations and their few, feeble jokes. In fact, by the time I'd finished the book I was beginning to fancy that already I knew more about the Hebrew language than the poor Cohens ever would; that I had already grasped something of its inner spirit, of its harshness, its archaic severity and compression, its lack of sinuosity, all of which were illustrated for me not just in its sounds and constructions but even in its epigraphy.

Privately, without telling Mr. Saltzmann, I took some of the Hebrew books from their place in the bookshelf, and worked through various passages that I found I could cope with. The easiest passages for me to read, all questions of grammar aside, were in the Bible, both because the stories I chose were already familiar to me, and because I could always check my understanding of what I'd read against the English version. One of the first of the tales I went through in this way, reading the Hebrew and English in alternation, was that in which God "proved" Abraham by asking of him the sacrifice of "his son, his only son, whom he loved, even Isaac," before accepting the sacrifice of a ram caught in a thicket instead. "And afterwards they rose up and went together to Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt in Beersheba."

It was a curious experience to read it all in the original Hebrew for the first time, knowing that in Beersheba, which I had hoped to have visited by that time, there once again dwelt a Hebrew-speaking people who, like myself, were reputed to be descended from the tribe of Abraham and Isaac. How long, and in how many places, everything had been going on: fathers, sons, death, sheep, thornbushes, the lot.

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IV

"AND ABRAHAM EXPIRED and died in a good old age, an old man and full of years; and was gathered unto his people. And Isaac and Ishmael his sons buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron. . . ."

Well, it hadn't been quite like that. My father hadn't died. Modern medical science, personified by Dr. Friedenberg and his colleagues, had seen to that. Nor was he all that old. He had in fact only just retired from work. Three months previously, seeing that none of his sons showed any interest in it, he had sold the cattlefeed plant he had established in the town many years before. Which, as everyone said, was a blessing, in view of what happened to him.

WHAT HAPPENED to him, firstly, was that he woke one morning with a stomach ache. This wasn't altogether unusual; he was both choleric and dyspeptic by temperament. He dosed himself liberally with milk of magnesia, wandered about the house in dressing-gown and pajamas, complaining to anyone who would listen to him about how rotten he was feeling, and then went to bed. Before driving into town that morning I went into his bedroom and asked if there was anything I could do for him. He answered with a peremptory "No!" The curtains were drawn against the rays of the sun, but every corner of the room was irradiated with a faint yellow light that seemed more baffling to the eye than darkness itself. He had some kind of antiquated air-conditioning outfit in his room, a boxlike affair the size of a small refrigerator, which rattled and wheezed and produced no cool air at all, so far as I could judge. The noise was distracting; his irritability was embarrassing; his illness was obviously not serious. I left him and went into town. My final exams at the university were a couple of weeks behind me, and my departure for Israel was booked for a few days ahead. I was a busy man, then; or felt myself to be one.

When I came back I found our family doctor in my father's room. There was a smell of disinfectant in the air. When I greeted my father there was no answer; he lay on his back with his head turned aside. I leaned over him and saw something glittering in the tiny hollow of bone next to his eye. His face contracted and he groaned; that bright spot shivered and disappeared. Only then did I realize it had been a tear.

The doctor had been putting his things into his case; he beckoned my mother and me to follow him out of the room. In the passage he said, "I've given him something to ease the pain. He should settle down." He added in a puzzled tone, "It's the intensity of the pain that I don't like. If he isn't much better by tonight he'll have to go into hospital. For observation."

The pain hadn't eased by evening; it had become far worse. His temperature had risen sharply; his groans rang through the house; he hardly knew where he was. He asked for water, for the doctor, for more blankets, for fewer blankets, for the air conditioner to be turned on, for it to be turned off. Under a gray bristle of beard his face was twisted into a new shape; his eyes shone with a light I had never seen in them before. The previous day he had been a trim, fit, firm-fleshed man just past middle-age, no more, vigorous in his movements, pugnacious in his expression, quick in his glances. And even in the morning he had appeared to be, at worst, an unwell, irritable old man indulging himself in a sense of grievance against the unreliability of his own body. But now, within a matter of hours, he had become a tormented stranger, other than himself, other to himself. What one saw in his eyes was not so much pain or fear as a stark incredulous glare of interrogation.

For what seemed minutes on end that glare would be fixed on one point or another in his room; then he would heave up in the bed, his lips uttering sounds, sighs, non-words; he would fall back into brief, uneasy snatches of sleep.

The doctor came again at sunset, and phoned immediately for an ambulance. When it came the patient was wheeled down the garden path on a stretcher, put in the back of the cumbersome vehicle and driven away. Some of our neighbors and the people across the road stood at their gates and watched the spectacle, enjoying to the utmost the solemnity and drama of it all.

Dr. Friedenberg was artless, sincere, and conscientious. Born and bred in Lyndhurst, trained in Cape Town and Edinburgh, he was a stalwart, square-shouldered, flat-faced man, whose ears had suffered much damage as a result of his prowess, during his medical-student years, as a rugby lock-forward. When we stood together on the pavement his troubled face loomed many inches above mine in the dying light. He made no pretense at being omniscient. He confessed he was very puzzled. He said he was going to call in the town's one specialist physician immediately, for a consultation. Then they might have to call on the town's one specialist surgeon. Would I and my mother be at the hospital later that evening? I said I would be, and he walked away with his rolling rugby-player's stride to his car. I remember finding the purposefulness of that walk of his absurdly comforting.

My father was operated on early the next morning. At about eleven that night we were called to what proved to be the first of a series of vigils in anticipation of his death. Later he was operated on a second time, and a third; each operation being the result of a crisis, and each in turn producing other crises. There were vigils at midday, at night, in the dead hours of pre-dawn. The hospital was most punctilious in summoning us each time they believed him to be on the point of

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dying. But there was nothing we could do, once we were there, except sit about interminably in one waiting-room or another, or loiter up and down night-empty corridors, looking at the funereal vases of flowers that stood in front of every door.

When we were allowed into his room we witnessed deliriums, bouts of shuddering that looked violent enough to shake his joints apart, prolonged, sunken spells of nausea, when the expression on his unmoving, strangely averted features made one think his flesh had turned in disgust from itself. One night he choked and choked while the nurses spooned from his throat the mucus in which he appeared literally to be drowning. Apparatus of various kinds—stands, tubes, clamps, bottles of blood and saline fluid, oxygen cylinders of great weight in metal cradles—constantly stood or hung about his bed. You might have thought some sort of complicated industrial process was taking place, without which he could not die. A faint smell of suppuration came from his dressings. On his best days, when he wasn't totally unconscious or conscious only of pain and nausea, his hands wandered over the bedclothes, his lips constantly muttered meaningless words. The gaze of his eyes was sightless, turned inward; the interrogation that had been in them was quenched. His nose seemed to grow in length, but everything else about shrank from day to day, his arms in particular taking on an oddly slight, boyish, negligible appearance. The doctors and the nurses made no secret of their surprise that he was not dead.

He had never been seriously ill before, and what had happened to him was as shockingly unexpected to us as if he had been the victim of some savage accident. Yet we also had to contend, day after day, then week after week, with the torment of slowness, doubt, and anticipation. During that time I came to think of his death as the true end of his life in a sense that had simply never occurred to me before: death was life's goal, its only certain aim and intention, it was the destination for the sake of which the journey was taken. It was not an unfortunate, retrograde flaw in nature's arrangements, an arbitrary, unnecessary interruption of life; it was not the last, most deplorable accident we would all have to endure. There was nothing arbitrary or accidental about it. My father's life had been a ceaseless, unknowing, unswerving trek toward these hideous days and hours; they were the summation of his life as well as its undoing. He had moved through time as through a landscape, distracted by a thousand moods, experiences, possessions, achievements, memories, but always, unfalteringly, in one direction only, in this direction. And as with him, so with everyone else who lived or had ever lived or ever would. So many deaths already! So many still to die!

Could any discoveries or revelations have been more commonplace? Indeed, no. That was just the point. That was precisely the thought which produced in me a kind of vertigo, associated in my mind with the long, darkly glistening, strictly regular corridors of the hospital. Afterward, it was the only recollection I had of the stress within my body of shock, pity, or fear.

I had of course canceled my flight to Israel; I couldn't leave in such circumstances. My departure had been put off indefinitely. I no longer gave it a thought. I could remember how eager I had been to leave home, to travel, to see new places, meet new people, and do new work. But I could no longer remember why I had wanted any of these things, I couldn't find my way back to wanting them.

V

It was then that I met Boaz, the Israelite. I found him on the farm. He came to the car as soon as I arrived one day, and asked if he could speak to me when I had finished what I had come to do.

The first thing you saw when you looked at Boaz was his blind eye. It was swollen, glaucous, without iris or pupil, always open. Its size and fixity were startling, even horrifying. What was more startling still, however, was your realization that while you had been staring at that dead, sightless orb, *he* had been regarding you, unobserved as it were, with his good eye. That one was small, yellow, lively, set under a wrinkled lid.

His head was shaven, his skin was drawn tight against the bones of his face, and lights shone in glints from his darkness. His body was startlingly thin, melodramatically so, as if he had willed it to be like that in order to point some obscure yet incontrovertible moral. I wouldn't care to guess his age: he could have been anything between forty and sixty, perhaps more. His clothes were as ragged as those of any other farm African. When he walked it was with odd, stiff, elongated strides; when he stood still, he held himself with an almost soldierly uprightness.

His air of patience was indistinguishable, somehow, from confidence, as he waited near the car, not moving from it, while I went about my business. I had asked him to tell me at once what he wanted; but he had said no, he would rather wait to talk to me, it would be better. He wanted to talk to me alone—"apart" was the word he used. Puzzled, curious, a little taken aback, I asked Piet, when we were a little distance from the car, who the stranger was; but all Piet would say was that his name was Boaz, that he had arrived on the farm a few days previously, and that he was some kind of preacher. He didn't know any more, Piet insisted, than that.

I'd arrived later than usual that afternoon, and I was more than usually conscientious about the sheep-counting. So by the time we were finished the sun was low in the west, red, growing larger; around it were gathering the clouds that invar-

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iably appeared in the western corner of the horizon at that hour, after even the most cloudless days. Those clouds, together with the dust that was always in the air, the flat openness of the country, and the strength of the sun, all combined to produce the most spectacular sunsets, day after day: immense, silent, rapid combustions that flared violently into color and darkened simultaneously. It always seemed suddenly that you became aware that the colors had been consumed and that only the darkness remained; that the day was over, it would soon be full night.

My conversation with Boaz lasted longer than I had expected it to, though the request he actually had to make of me was simple enough. All he wanted, he said, speaking to me in Afrikaans, was my permission to live for a time on the farm, in one of the huts that neither Piet nor Kagisho used. (Altogether there were half-a-dozen small, mud-walled, iron-roofed huts for the African laborers, in a group sheltered by a screen of thornbushes some way behind the farmhouse.) He was an Israelite, Boaz told me. He was a preacher. He traveled about the country on foot, carrying his message to all who would listen. The destination of each of his journeys, he said, became known to him only after he had arrived at it. After each departure he knew that it had been right for him to move on again. Now he was here, having come from Lyndhurst along the Samarian Road; and here, it had been decided, was where he should stay.

An Israelite! Nothing less! Would he tell me who the Israelites were? He did so, at some length. Later I was to look up old newspaper files covering some of the events of which he had spoken. The facts he gave me were accurate enough. About half a century before, under the leadership of a certain Enoch Mgijima, one of the separatist African religious sects had rejected the New Testament as a white man's fiction and "returned" to the worship of the one God of Israel. Inspired by its prophet the sect grew enormously in numbers and influence among the Africans in the bigger cities, until Mgijima called on his followers to gather at a village called Bulhoek, in order to celebrate the Passover. Several thousand obeyed him, coming together to feast and to pray for the coming of the Messiah. Days passed. Eventually the authorities told the people to move. They refused. One morning detachments of armed police arrived and ordered them to leave immediately. Instead of dispersing, the Israelites tried to attack the police who opened fire at close range. Hundreds were shot down. Those who survived fled or were arrested. Mgijima disappeared. Thereafter the movement went out of sight, was lost to any public record. However, some of the survivors of the Bulhoek massacre continued to meet as they had always done, in tiny, secret conventicles in the larger cities. It was from one of these that Boaz had come.

While he had been telling his story, we had left the car and walked a little way into the veld. Insects whirred out of the tussocks of grass at our feet; a single bird gave a melancholy, repeated whistle; I heard the voices of children from the huts, and in the distance the bleating of the sheep as they went down to graze. A faint evening breeze had sprung up. The blaze in the west was as fierce as it was remote.

His parents, Boaz went on, had been Israelites. They had taken him to their meetings, they had read the Bible to him every morning and evening, they had forbidden him to eat pork. But he had not been interested in their religion. He had wanted to be like all the other children who ran about in the streets and whose parents did not care what they did, or what they believed in, or what they ate. He left home as soon as he could, when he had been fourteen. He had had many jobs, of all kinds, in many places. He did not go home until years and years had passed. Then he heard one day that his father had died, and he decided he should go back, in order to comfort his mother.

DURING HIS first night at home he had a dream. He did not see God in his dream, for God could not be seen, but he heard Him. Everything was still and empty in the dream, and out of the stillness God spoke to him as if he were Joshua, saying, "The book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou may do all that is written therein. Have I not commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest." He woke, and knew that he had been chosen. He was a chosen man among those chosen people.

"Like I choose this stone," Boaz said, stooping to pick up a faintly translucent pebble, and holding it out to me on the palm of his hand.

It was a kind that was common enough around Lyndhurst: irregular in shape, smooth to the touch, brown in color, darkening inward from its shining surface, so that you could see some way into it, rather as with a lump of resin. I knew such stones to be volcanic in origin, like those diamonds that were mined in Lyndhurst. It lay in his hand, its dim light sealed eternally within it.

"Like this stone," he went on calmly, not at all like a man putting forward a paradox, "chooses me."

He brought it closer to his good eye, bending his head over it. "You think this stone is dead?" he asked me. "You think it's here for nothing? No, never. It can't move, but it can wait for me, lying here, while all my life I've been coming nearer and nearer to it. You understand? Now I pick it up, and hold it, and look at it. See how it shines! Perhaps it speaks and sings also, only we can't hear it. But God can. Imagine! Imagine!" he re-

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peated fervently, putting the stone to his ear. Then he held it to mine, his clenched hand against my temple.

I could hear only the blurred, small sounds of the evening breeze, nudging at intervals against me, on its journey across the empty country. I did not speak, but Boaz dropped his arm and looked down once more at the stone. With a jerk of his arm he flung it from him. We watched it fly through the air, a fast-moving, diminishing speck that fell out of sight, somewhere beyond the double-track that ran down from the farmhouse.

"So it's gone," I said.

"Gone from us," he corrected me. "It's somewhere else now, where it has to be."

A little later I asked him if he wanted to hold "meetings"—I couldn't think of any other word to use—while he was on the farm. He was silent. I looked up into his gaunt, disfigured face. He blinded me with his blind eye. Then he said: "I am holding a meeting now."

I turned and began walking back to the car, parked forlornly on the rise. He followed me. What he had just said had gone home. I had been moved by his story, I had listened for the song he had said was locked in the stone, I had envied his faith in the meaningfulness of his actions, I had felt a bond with him in his absurd, wild claim that he, too, was some kind of Jew. Why shouldn't he be? What sort of Jew was I? Wasn't it possible that he knew more about the spirit and fervor of the Israelites than I ever would? That I might learn from him something that no one else could ever teach me? Yes, just because he was a poor, black, skeleton-thin zealot who had been "sent" to live in a tumbledown hut on a farm that was nowhere. Just because he was a nut, a religious loony, a dreamer, a hearer of voices, a man you could do nothing with.

But all he had asked of me was permission to stay on the farm. It was easy for me to tell him that he could. "But I don't want any trouble," I said. "Not with Piet, not with anyone. Do you understand?"

He held me in the disjunction of his stare or stares before assuring me that there would be no trouble.

VI

DURING THE FIRST few weeks that followed, Boaz was as good as his word. When I went out to the farm Piet and Kagisho, who seemed proud to have Boaz living with them, told me that he spent a lot of time praying, and that he preached sometimes to them and to Africans from the neighboring farms. On these visits Boaz himself invariably made a point of coming to see me, after I had finished with the others. He never asked me for food or money: presumably the others gave him the little he needed.

What he did ask me for, however, during our early conversations, was information. Information about the Jews: he wanted to know what I could tell him about the Jewish dietary laws, about the festivals, about the liturgy, about the dispersion of the Jews to all the countries of the world, about Zionism and the State of Israel. Information about myself: he wanted to know who I was, what I was doing with myself, what I had done before he had met me, what I planned to do with my life. Information about current events, which he interpreted in ways I could not follow, according to various texts from the Bible. I answered all his questions as frankly as I could, and he listened carefully. We talked at the car, or in the car, or in the deserted house, or walking about the veld as we had the first time. He was always eager and exalted in his manner; but he was always polite and firm as well. Sometimes when he found himself at a loss for a word his lips would tremble, as if at the strain of containing the force momentarily pent up within him; but there was nothing swooning, babbling, hysterical, or ranting about him, even when he was at his most intense. He was utterly humorless, and utterly direct. He made less of the difference in color between us—and the difference it meant in status, legal rights, opportunities, wealth, education—than any other African I had ever met. That he believed in an omnipresent God and I did not was the only difference between us that mattered at all in his eyes. Or eye, rather.

It was after we had had three or four such conversations that Boaz unexpectedly told me one day that he now knew why he had been "sent" to the farm. It was his task to convert me to a belief in God. He had been "chosen" to do so.

"Oh no!" I remember exclaiming absurdly, as if he had just broken an item of bad news to me.

"Yes, I will do it with God's help," he answered. "You will rejoice when it has been done."

We were standing where we had stood several times before, on the rise near the car; the sunset was once again blazing away on our right. But in the week that had passed since I had last seen him there had been a brief, fierce, dust-laden blast of wind from the direction where the sun was setting; and it was now much cooler than it had been, winter was beginning. Boaz had buttoned his threadbare jacket and turned up the lapels. He waited for my response. I could see that he, at any rate, was already rejoicing in what he was to accomplish.

"No," I said again. "No, Boaz. You must leave me alone."

"How can I?" he asked. "You are not alone. You never have been."

He was immovable, utterly dedicated to the task he believed he had been set. Looking at him, I felt an impossible mixture of emotions. I was acutely embarrassed. I was touched and flattered that the welfare of my soul should mean so much to him. I was ashamed to think that secretly, without ever admitting to myself what I was really

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doing, I had invited him to make such an attempt for me, or on me. I was sorry I had encouraged him by talking to him as much as I had. I was resentful that he should feel free to tamper with my beliefs, or lack of belief. I was afraid that he might succeed.

The next time I went out to the farm Piet said to me, with a curious, sideways, lingering glance, quite unlike any I had previously had from him, that Boaz was "always praying for the baas."

When we returned from the *kraal* I could see Boaz waiting for me near the car, as he always did. What was I to do? To avoid him altogether? To try to talk him out of his mission? To humor him, to pretend that he had succeeded, in the hope that he would leave me alone, leave the farm, believing his duty done? Should I simply tell him to go, to get out, that the permission I'd given him to stay on the farm was withdrawn? Or should I say to him that he would never, never get me to recognize his God, no matter how passionately he prayed for me, or tried to get me to pray with him? That even if there was a God I was by nature deaf to him, blind to him, insensible to his touch on me?

IN THE END I tried all these ways of dealing with Boaz, as well as another that took me profoundly by surprise, and with which I persisted far longer than I had with any of the others. I tried to believe, as Boaz wanted me to, in a God of life and death, the God my ancestors had believed in through their thousands of years of history; a God who was present in Lyndhurst or on the farm; who cared whether my father recovered from his illness or did not, and who had his reasons for prolonging his life or ending it, as he had with the lives of all other men; a God who would sustain me in my own life, and in the knowledge of whom I would find the purpose and the sense of ultimate value I needed. I tried to pray, I tried to read as much of the Bible as I could in Hebrew and English, I went to the synagogue on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, I tried *faute de mieux* to pretend or imagine that I did already believe, in the hope that the genuine belief would follow.

Boaz was not the only one who helped me during this period of trial. Though I did not tell Mr. Saltzmann about Boaz, or about what he was trying to do for me, or about what I was trying to do for myself, I had consulted Mr. Saltzmann about some of the points of Jewish ritual Boaz had raised, he had noticed my attendance at the synagogue, and he must have found my mood or attitude more sympathetic to his faith than it had previously been. At any rate, our lessons were soon being neglected more shamefully than ever before; and Mr. Saltzmann revealed a kind of ironic ardor that he had previously hidden from me. He swayed in his chair, he blew his nose, he made his points in the air with an extended, startled forefinger; he tipped his hat forward with a flick from behind, so that its brim was low over his forehead, and thrust it back to run his fingers through his hair; he spoke of Jerusalem and Babylon and the Vilna Gaon, of Auschwitz, of Isaiah, and the Baal Shem Tov. If Boaz spoke most often of God's power, seeing it figured forth as much in the decisions and acts of every day as in the pageant of nature's cruder, simpler effects that was constantly displayed between our bald stretch of earth and the sky above, Mr. Saltzmann talked more of God's justice and mercy. He spoke of how unthinkable it was that everything men and women had always had to endure should go unrecorded, unnoticed, unrecompensed, for age after age, empire after empire, life after life; of how inconceivable it was that his, Mr. Saltzmann's, demand for justice had no connection with the innermost workings of history, with the intentions of the universe, with the final nature of reality.

In his way Mr. Saltzmann, too, was impressive. But I admit his words had less effect on me, when I was in his presence, than those of Boaz: partly because Mr. Saltzmann was so much more familiar to me, and so much less fanatical, but mostly because it was Boaz who, after all, had declared my conversion to be his mission. "Why *me*?" I asked him, more than once, in remonstrance, or anger, or amusement; and he invariably answered me, as he had before, with all passion and sincerity, "We have been chosen to choose each other. We belong to the people of Israel." I could not get beyond that conviction, beneath it, over it. "Is he still praying for me?" I asked Piet once or twice, and he answered me with an air of unsmiling rebuke, "Always."

So I went back and forth between Mr. Saltzmann in Lyndhurst and Boaz on the farm; often I went out to the farm when I had no business there other than to see Boaz. I made no attempt to bring the two believers together. I felt, almost superstitiously, that I could do so only if I had brought them together within myself; only if through them I had arrived at a comprehension that would make my acquaintance with them both, at that particular time in my life, self-justifying, self-explanatory, reasonable, an illustration of the necessary principles of our shared existence. I argued with them both, I challenged them both, I denounced them both. There were times when I told myself that I was doing no more than studying them as specimens, or that I was practicing some kind of hoax on them, or that I was kindly doing them a favor in pretending to be interested in their preposterous beliefs. Yet even when I said such things to myself I remained convinced that if I ever let shame, guilt, embarrassment, or my own critical mind inhibit me from what I was doing, I would always regret it, I would always believe that I had let slip an extraordinary chance which would never recur.

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Invariably, every day, I still called in at the hospital. To the astonishment of the doctors my father had plainly begun to recover; Dr. Friedenberg had finally summoned up the courage to say, "I think we'll soon be able to say that he's out of danger." In all, four months were to pass before he emerged from the hospital.

VII

THE FARM had always been far more of a hobby or extravagance of my father's than a source of income; he was what his Afrikaner neighbours called a *tjek-boek boer*, a checkbook farmer. At different times he had put a great acreage under the plough and planted mealies; he had gone in for the breeding of karakul lambs; he had attempted to raise pedigree Red Poll cattle. None of these enthusiasms had turned out well. The mealies died of drought; he lost his appetite for karakul breeding when he found that the lambs had to be slaughtered at the age of three days if their pelts were to realize the highest value; the pedigree bull he had bought lacked the progenitive urge. It was fortunate for me that nothing more complicated than speculation in sheep was the current activity on the farm; the animals were simply supposed to graze on the veld until such time as they were sent to the sales in Lyndhurst.

I was surprised, therefore, that when he began to make his first attempts to come out of the utter seclusion and isolation of his illness, my father should have asked me as often as he did about the farm. His business having been sold, I suppose he felt the farm to be the only hold he now had on the world of possessions, of activity, of competition, of buying and selling at known prices, in which he had lived for so long and from which he had been so abruptly sundered. Usually when I went to see him he still lay silent on the bed, with an expression on his face that was remote, abstracted, almost aristocratic in its detachment and insubstantiality. But if he did do more than greet me with a flicker of his eyelids or a few indifferent words, almost invariably he would later ask me if I had been out to the farm, if I had found everything there in order, if it had rained on the farm, if I thought Piet was carrying out his job properly. Because I could see it pleased him if I said I had just been out there, or was on the point of going out, I said these things even when they weren't true.

However, one day when he asked me what was happening on the farm, I began to tell him about Boaz. Previously I hadn't mentioned to him that Boaz was living there. But now I described how I had found him on the farm, and how he had spoken to me, and what he looked like; I repeated what I had learned from him about the Israelite sect, and about his own life. I tried also to say something about the nature of Boaz's belief in God: how absolute it was, and how direct; how he saw God's purposes plainly written everywhere; how he believed himself to have been chosen by God and yet at liberty to deny his chosenness, in a world in which everything was foreknown yet undetermined. The one subject about which I said nothing was the plan that Boaz had for me, and my own reactions to it. I felt I shouldn't speak of that until I knew, in the simplest way, where I stood. Then I would either need to say everything about it, or never speak of it at all.

But my voice and manner must have shown my father that Boaz had become much more to me than a freak about whom I could tell amusing anecdotes. At any rate, early in my story I noticed that the sick man was listening to me with a curious intentness; but it wasn't until I'd almost finished that I realized just how strangely he was looking at me, and in what a disturbed, random way he was moving his hands about on the bedclothes. At once I felt that I had been inconsiderate; in my preoccupation with Boaz I had gone on for much too long and overtired him. So I brought the story to an end as quickly as I could. "I hope he'll still be around when you get up," I said. "Then you'll be able to see him for yourself."

"No! I don't want to see him!" he exclaimed, with an inexplicable, weak urgency in his voice. "You must tell him to go. You mustn't wait. You must chase him away."

"Why?" I asked in surprise.

He tried to sit up, but managed to do no more than get his head a few inches from the pillows before it fell back. Then he said again, "Tell him he must go."

"But why?" I insisted. "What's the matter? He's doing no harm to anyone. He isn't making any trouble. He's just—just—"

"Tell him he must go."

I couldn't argue with him about it; he was too weak. "All right," I said.

But I had no intention of doing what he'd told me. For Boaz's sake I couldn't do it; for my own; even in a way for my father's. I felt that the demand had come out of the weakness and disorder of his illness, it was nothing more than a sick man's whim.

The next time I went to see him I thought he might well have forgotten the whole conversation. But I'd hardly come into the room before he asked me, as if he'd been thinking of nothing else since we had last spoken, "Have you been to the farm? Have you told that man to go?"

"Yes," I said. "I told him. He'll be going soon. You don't have to worry about it."

"Soon isn't good enough. He must go at once. I don't want him there. I don't want him on my place."

"But why not?" I protested. "What have you got against him?"

Again I didn't get a direct reply. After some minutes, however, he began to ramble in a dis-

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connected yet obsessive way about Boaz—or rather, about "that man, who calls himself an Israelite." His voice was so low that I had to strain to hear him; his words were interspersed with the louder sounds of his breathing, or with spells when he merely moved his lips without producing any sounds. The incoherent craziness of what he was saying was made more painful by the physical effort that went into it, and by the terrible earnestness with which he searched my face at every phrase and in every silence for my reaction to his words.

That man who called himself an Israelite, he said, was responsible for his illness. He was a usurper, an enemy, a demon, an evil spirit. He wanted him to die. He came to take what wasn't his. He had to be driven away. At once. Couldn't I have seen it? How could I have let him stay there for so long? What had I thought I was doing? Hadn't I understood that it was a matter of life and death? Yes, life and death, nothing less. That man was a *malakh ha-movess,* an angel of death. He was waiting to finish his work, he would stay there as long as he was allowed to. But I could drive him away if I really wanted to. Unless I was in league with him and was also waiting for him to finish what he had come to do. . . .

So he went on, interminably. It was pathetic, tedious, unnerving. His eyes, filled with fear and reproach, would not leave me. I tried to soothe and reassure him; but when he finally fell silent it was not, I felt, because I had succeeded but simply because he was too fatigued to go on. He beckoned me to come closer, and grasped my hand; his touch was hot and dry. "You must also take care," he said in a voice laden with anxiety and foreboding. "You mustn't think it'll be different for you. You understand? You won't escape either. When he's finished with me then it'll be your turn. I'm worried for you also—"

"Don't worry," I interrupted him. "I understand. You must rest now. Everything will be all right. I'll do what you want me to do."

He lay on his back, his nose raised toward the ceiling, his mouth pinched beneath it. His hands were on his breast, rising and falling with every breath he took. I sat by the side of the bed until he had sunk into a doze. He did not stir when I crept out of the room.

Outside the hospital the afternoon air was tepid, still, yellow. Shadows stretched over dusty lawns and dejected beds of flowers. In the road beyond the hospital grounds was a war memorial: an incised concrete slab, surrounded by steps, chains, cast-iron rifles stacked in threes. The unreality of my father's words infected everything around me, everything I thought of. Yet I felt that I was seeing them again for what they were, after too long a lapse. Streets and buildings were nothing more than forms of a common inertness; my thoughts nothing more than forms of delusion. What kind of imbecile, self-indulgent credulity or conceit had been keeping me going between Boaz and Mr. Saltzmann these last few weeks? In what way were my superstitious hopes or expectations better founded than my father's wild fears? He at least had the excuse of having been weakened almost to the point of death by his illness; whereas I had done no more than watch his struggles.

BECAUSE MY CAR was parked facing toward town, away from home, I drove in that direction. It was a Saturday afternoon; the shops were closed and the streets were more than usually empty. No one was about in the Market Square, except for a group of youths sitting on their motor bikes, gunning their engines and shouting at one another, going nowhere. I turned to the right: more closed shops, a bridge over some railway lines. A little further on was the fence around an abandoned mine, and then streets of low, iron-roofed houses. A few more minutes, a few more turns, and they were behind me. The town was behind me, though the mine-dumps still straggled alongside the road for some distance. I came to the crossing from which the Samarian Road ran off to one side, and I left the main road to join it. It seemed that I was going to the farm.

Why not? Once more I went along the dreary, winding, familiar route. If town had been emptier than usual, the road was busier. Several family parties had chosen to go along it for their Saturday afternoon outings. Now their cars were parked at various unremarkable spots along the road. The adults sat just outside the cars, listening on portable radios to commentaries on the big rugby matches; the children ran about in the veld, jumping on or off the antheaps, or playing hide-and-seek in the scrub.

By the time I reached the farm I'd left behind the last of these groups. Once through the cattle-grid, the road ran straight for a mile or so, then swerved a little to begin the short ascent to the farmhouse and the *koppies* behind. From a distance the house looked no more substantial than a box, with the lines of the *kraals* and outbuildings scratched around it. The huts where Piet and the others lived were out of sight, hidden behind their shelter of thornbushes.

I pulled up the car in front of the house. No one came to greet me. I didn't expect anyone to come. I hadn't said that I would be paying a visit to the farm that day, so even if the car had been seen approaching along the road, it would have been taken to be someone merely passing through on his way to Platkop or the farms beyond. I sat in the car for a little while, listening to the ticking noises made by the engine as it cooled. Nothing moved about me. I could hear no other sound. Eventually I opened the door and stepped outside.

It was only when I was crossing the bare space between the house and the grove of thornbushes some distance behind it that I realized why I was there. I had come to tell Boaz that he had failed.

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He was welcome to stay on the farm or to leave it, as he wished. But I no longer had anything to say to him or any interest in listening to what he had to say to me.

VIII

THE GROUND BETWEEN the thornbushes had been turned into soft sand by the coming and going of the people who lived there. So my footsteps made no sound as I approached. The first that was known of my presence was when one of the yellow, long-tailed dogs which were always hanging around the place got to its feet and ran forward, barking loudly. By then I had already come upon the congregation gathered in front of the hut which Boaz had taken for himself.

About a dozen people were there, apart from Piet and Kagisho and their families. I knew none of the other drab, raggedly dressed, undersized men and women, farm laborers and their wives, who were squatting on the ground. In front of them stood Piet, with a Bible in one hand and in the other a long stick or stave surmounted by a Star of David plaited out of twigs. Next to him, on an iron bedstead, his body covered by a confusion of dirty blankets, lay Boaz. The sight of the bed dragged out into the open air, exposed to the sunlight, was somehow in itself almost as shocking or unnatural as Boaz's look of illness, collapse, abandonment, even decay.

He looked very ill indeed, like a dying man. His face was gray in color, small, annulled, lightless. His lips were parted, his eyes closed. He was totally unconscious; the only person there who was unaware that I had come. The others had turned to look at me resentfully, as an intruder, a spy, a white enemy; and hopelessly, too, as someone who had the power to stop what they were doing and send them packing, and would probably do so. Only the children, the oval whites of their eyes immense with expectation and pent-up excitement, seemed pleased by the distraction my arrival offered.

No one moved or spoke. The sun shone down from a great height on the sand, huddled people, huts of mud and scraps of iron, the unconscious man on the bed. Heavy shadows merged indistinguishably on the sand. The dogs sniffed cautiously at my feet and wagged their curving tails. In the silence a sheep bleated loudly, resonantly, with a kind of ferocity of protest contained in the very helplessness and tremulousness of the sound. Until then I hadn't noticed the creature, tethered by a piece of rope around its neck to a thorntree a few yards away, on one side. It jerked its head, opened its mouth, and again the noise exploded, an astonishingly loud call or yell to come from such a small cavern of flesh and bone. High, full, vibrating, the noise went on for longer than seemed possible, maddening in its stridency and urgency, in its stupidity and comprehension alike. Even while the noise still rang in my ears, I found myself looking at Piet and he at me: in the look we exchanged I knew, among some other more surprising and important facts, that that clamorous sheep was not his.

I can't say for how long we stared at one another. He was bareheaded; and the unfamiliar prominence of his hard, round, shaven skull made him look like a stranger. He took a deep breath, as if to meet a challenge, raised his stave in the air, and began to speak in a tone I had never heard from him before. He was no longer the businessman *manqué* that I had known, or the patient, slyly submissive underling, or the conscientious shepherd. Or if he was still a shepherd, it was of quite another flock, which he was leading to pastures I had never seen. His voice was loud, hectoring, defiant, his gestures were bold and emphatic. He had won back the attention of his audience immediately. One or two of them still glanced anxiously at me from time to time, but even they, like the others, were answering Piet's cries and exhortations with cries of their own, or with murmurs that they took up in turn from one another, or with phrases that they chanted in unison until Piet silenced them with a single wave of his hand. The little congregation swayed and moaned, the people clutched at the dust with their hands or clapped them together, they sat still and tense when Piet lowered his voice to a whisper. Whenever he turned to the recumbent, motionless figure of the sick man on the bed, opening his arms wide or lifting them high into the air as he did so, his audience was utterly silent, as if waiting for the sick man himself to rise and answer the speech breaking continually above him.

I couldn't understand a word of what Piet was saying.

Not a word. He was speaking one of the African languages: a speech that to my ears was composed entirely of clicks, trills, gutturals, deep plosives. Completely cut off from his meanings, I couldn't even tell where one word ended and another began. Yet, as in a dream, I felt that the incomprehensible sounds he was uttering were directed more specifically to me than to anyone else in his audience. The others may have forgotten about me; but I was certain that Piet had not.

As in a dream, too, foreknowledge and knowledge after the event were commingled inextricably in my mind. Each event surprised me as it took place; but once it had happened it seemed to me that it was just what I had been waiting for ever since I had come. Yes, Piet would abruptly bring his speech to an end, at a moment when no one had apparently expected him to do so. Yes, he would point at two men in the congregation, who would get hastily to their feet and go to the tethered sheep. Yes, one of them would grab it by the ears from behind and pull it back, making it rear up momentarily, before the other man knocked

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its hind legs off the ground. It sat grotesquely upright on its rump, with its forelegs dangling forward, its head pulled back, its throat exposed. Yes, inevitably, Piet would cross the space between himself and the pair struggling with the sheep; he would take a clasp knife from his pocket and open it; he would bring it to the animal's throat, and then, with a deft sweep, do no more than sever the rope.

The maddened animal plunged, screamed, kicked, collapsed, was dragged upright again. Once more it sat in an artificial man-like posture, its thin forelegs held up in front of it with a curiously finicking helplessness, a disgusting daintiness. It showed its even teeth, its tongue, its wide, flat nostrils. Its eyes were rolled back into its dark head. It looked like a shrunken, demented old man; the men kneeling or stooped around it, their faces clenched with absorption, were animalized, rapt, barely conscious.

And now?

Yes, of course, once he had done it I had known all along that he would. Piet pointed at me, with the hand in which he held the knife, and at last spoke in a language I could understand.

"You can see how sick Boaz is. This morning he fell, and since then he has not been able to get up. His heart is failing him. So we ask God to take this sacrifice, instead, and to let our teacher live."

Then he raised his voice, his hand still outstretched. "Boaz has prayed for you, many days. Now you will pray for him."

He held out the knife to me. The lamb plunged. I came toward it. Its eye was a yellow blaze of life, crossed by a black, expressionless, oblong pupil.

IX

BOAZ DIED the next morning, in the African section of the Lyndhurst General Hospital, to which I had brought him in the car. Piet had been right in his diagnosis. He had succumbed, Dr. Friedenberg said, to a "massive coronary occlusion." So the sacrifice was in vain.

Yes, I did do what had been asked of me. Under the blade of the knife I felt something soft and thick, then a resilience which suddenly failed, and the knife entered a hollow place behind it, a vacancy. It was a squalid, messy, pointless, godless act. Even while I was doing it I remembered as a child cutting open a tennis ball to see what was inside: the sensations under my hand were much the same. But the cutting of the sheep's throat was followed by a heavy spout of blood, and by cries of exultation from the others that were indistinguishable from cries of grief. It was followed, too, by a sudden seizure of rage within me that made me lash out with the blade again, even though it could do no more than it had already done. I wanted to punish the sheep for dying under my hand; I wanted to revenge myself against Boaz and my father for compelling me to be there and to learn what I had from them.

The outburst left me feeling calmer, a little tired, anxious to help Boaz in whatever way I could. The others made no objection when I said I would take him with me to hospital in Lyndhurst. Driving back to town, with Boaz awkwardly bundled into the back seat, I remember how consoling I found the emptiness of the countryside around me, its width, its indifference, its hard materiality. It was there, it would last. That was something to be grateful for, I felt then, not resentful of, as I had always been in the past.

I left Lyndhurst for Israel a few weeks later, carrying with me Mr. Saltzmann's parting gift of a *siddur*, containing the daily prayers of the Hebrew liturgy. My father had come home just before I left, though he was still confined to his bed for a month or so. During that time he arranged for a white foreman, a Boer by the name of Klaas Eybers, to live on the farm and work it with him, on a profit-sharing basis.

My father never again mentioned Boaz to me, and I did not speak of him either. Some years afterward I learned that Piet had left the farm just after my own departure. He had gone, my father said, into "the religion business" in one of the African townships around Lyndhurst, and had made a very good thing out of it. He had established his own church. My father had no idea what kind of rites were followed in it, but he did know that the money Piet got from his followers he invested in his ever-growing flock of sheep. He paid a fixed sum per head to continue grazing them on the farm.

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James Joyce in His Letters

Lionel Trilling

In 1935, near the end of a long affectionate letter to his son George in America, James Joyce wrote: "Here I conclude. My eyes are tired. For over half a century they have gazed into nullity, where they have found a lovely nothing."

It is not a characteristic utterance. Joyce was little given to making large statements about the nature of existence. As Dr. Johnson said of Dryden, he knew how to complain, but his articulate grievances were not usually of a metaphysical kind. They referred to particular circumstances of practical life, chiefly the lets and hindrances to his work; at least in his later years, such resentment as he expressed was less in response to what he suffered as a person than to the impediments that were put in his way as an artist.

And actually we cannot be certain that Joyce did indeed mean to complain when he wrote to George of his long gaze into "*nulla*"—his letters to his children were always in Italian—or that he was yielding to a metaphysical self-pity when he said he had found in it "*un bellissimo niente.*" The adjective may well have been intended not ironically but literally and Joyce can be understood to say that human existence is nullity right enough, yet if it is looked into with a vision such as his, the nothing that can be perceived really *is* lovely, though the maintenance of the vision is fatiguing work.

To read the passage in this way is in accord with our readiness nowadays to see Joyce as preeminently a "positive" writer, to be aware of the resistance he offered to nullity through his great acts of creation. From the famous climactic epiphany of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* in which life "calls" in all imaginable erotic beauty and is answered in ecstasy, he went on to celebrate human existence even in the pain, defeat, and humiliation that make up so large a part of its substance. He consciously intended Molly Bloom's ultimate "Yes" as a doctrinal statement, a judgment in life's favor made after all the adverse evidence was in. He contrived a rich poetry out of the humble and sordid, the sad repeated round of the commonplace, laying a significant emphasis on the little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love—it is much to the point that Joyce as a young man could speak of Wordsworth in superlative praise, with particular reference to *The Excursion,* for much of the power of his own work derives from the Wordsworthian purpose of discovering a transcendence by which life, in confrontation with nullity, is affirmed.

But this does not tell the whole story of the relation in which Joyce stood to nullity. He was not only resistant to it but also partisan with it. He loved it and sought to make it prevail. The transcendent affirmation of hypostasized life went along with a profound indifference, even a hostility, to a great many of the particularities in which the energies of life embody themselves. He could speak in thrilling archaic phrase of "the fair courts of life" yet the elaborations of developed society were for the most part of no account to him, and to much of the redundancy of culture as it proliferates in objects and practices that are meant to be pleasing he was chiefly apathetic. His alienation from so many of the modes and conditions of human existence is sometimes chilling.

Among life's processes, that of entropy makes an especial appeal to Joyce. The "paralysis" which is represented in *Dubliners* as the pathology of a nation at a particular moment of its history was also known to him as a general condition of life itself, and if he found it frightening, he also found it tempting. *Dubliners* does indeed have the import of social criticism that its auther often said it was meant to have. This "chapter in the moral history" of his nation levels an accusation to which the conscience of his race, when at last it will have been forged in the smithy of his soul, must be sensitive. But if the devolution of energy to the point of "paralysis" is, in a moral and social view, a condition to be deplored and reversed, it is also for Joyce a sacred and powerful state of existence. The attraction it had for him is nearly overt in the first story of *Dubliners,* "The Sisters," and in the last, "The Dead." "The special odor of corruption which, I hope, floats over my stories" is the true scent by which life is to be tracked to its last authenticity. It is not without reason that Samuel Beckett is often said to have represented

LIONEL TRILLING is George Edward Woodberry Professor of Literature and Criticism at Columbia University and the author of, among other works, *The Liberal Imagination, Beyond Culture,* and, most recently, *The Experience of Literature.*

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Joyce in the Hamm of *Endgame*, the terrible blind storyteller who presides over the quietus of Nature, himself on the verge of extinction but grimly cherishing and ordering what little life remains, setting against the ever-encroaching void, which he himself has helped bring about, an indomitable egoism that is itself an emptiness.

THE POWER of Joyce's work derives, we must see, not only from the impulse to resist nullity but also, and equally, from the impulse to make nullity prevail. Something of the destructive force was remarked by T. S. Eliot when, taking tea with Virginia Woolf and trying to convince his hostess that *Ulysses* was not to be dismissed as the work of one or another kind of "underbred" person, he characterized the author's achievement and the magnitude of his power by saying that he had "killed the 19th century." Eliot meant that Joyce by his radical innovations of style had made obsolete the styles of the earlier time, and also that, as a result of or in concomitance with the obsolescence that Joyce had effected, the concerns and sentiments to which the old styles were appropriate had lost their interest and authority. In 1922 the 19th century was not in high repute and one might suppose that the report of its having been killed would make an occasion for hope: with the old concerns and sentiments out of the way, those of the new day might be expected to flourish. But Eliot expressed no such expectation. Although he took it to be part of the great achievement of *Ulysses* that it had shown up "the futility of all the English styles," he went on to say that Joyce had destroyed his own future, for now there was nothing left for him to write about. Nor for anyone else: Eliot later said that with *Ulysses* Joyce had brought to an end the genre of the novel.

If there is truth in Eliot's observation, a phrase of Walter Pater's helps us understand what concerns and sentiments of the 19th century Joyce may be said to have killed. In a famous paragraph of the Conclusion to *The Renaissance,* Pater spoke of "success in life." It doesn't matter that he was saying that success in life was the ability to burn with a hard gemlike flame, to make all experience into an object of aesthetic contemplation. The point is that, at the high moment of his exposition of a doctrine directed against crass practicality, Pater could use a phrase that to us now can seem only vulgar, a form of words which scarcely even stockbrokers, headmasters, and philistine parents would venture to use. In the 19th century a mind as exquisite and detached as Pater's could take it for granted that upon the life of an individual person a judgment of success or failure might be passed. And the 19th-century novel was in nothing so much a product of its time as in its assiduity in passing this judgment.

It was of course moral or spiritual success that the novel was concerned with, and this "true" success often—though not always—implied failure as the world knows it. But a characteristic assumption of the novel was that the true success brought as much gratification as conventional opinion attributed to worldly success, that it was just as real and nearly as tangible. The conception of moral or spiritual achievement was, we may say, sustained and controlled by the society from whose conventions the triumph was wrested. The houses, servants, carriages, plate, china, linen, cash, credit, position, honor, power that were the goods of the conventional world served to validate the goods of the moral or spiritual life. At the heart of the novel is the idea that the world, the worldly world, Henry James's "great round world itself," might have to be given up in the interests of integrity or even simple decency. What made this idea momentous was the assumption that the surrender is of something entirely real, and in some way, in the forcible way of common sense, much to be desired. Upon the valuation of what is given up depends much of the valuation of what is gotten in exchange. Poor Julien Sorel! Poor Pip! Poor Phineas Finn! It was a dull-spirited reader indeed who did not feel what a pity it was that the young man could not make a go of Things As They Are and at the same time possess his soul in honor and peace. But since the soul was one of the possible possessions, it was of course to be preferred to all others, the more because the price paid for it was thought real and high. In the degree that the novel gave credence to the world while withholding its assent, it established the reality of the moral or spiritual success that is defined by the rejection of the world's values.

Credence given, assent withheld: for a time this position of the novel *vis-à-vis* the world was of extraordinary interest. At a certain point in the novel's relatively short history, in the first quarter of this century, there burst upon our consciousness a realization of how great had been its accomplishment, how important its function. It was on all sides seen to be what Henry James in effect said it was, what D. H. Lawrence explicitly called it, "the book of life."

Yet no sooner had the novel come to this glory than it was said, not by Eliot alone, to have died. In all likelihood the report is true. The question of the viability of the novel today is probably to be answered in the spirit of the man who, when asked if he believed in baptism, replied that of course he did, he had seen it performed many times. Novels are still ceaselessly written, published, reviewed, and on occasion hailed, but the old sense of their spiritual efficacy is ever harder to come by. One thing is certain: to whatever purposes the novel now addresses itself, it has outgrown the activity which, in the 19th century and in the early days of the 20th, was characteristic of the genre, virtually definitive of it, the setting of the values of the moral and spiritual life over against the values of the world. This is a confrontation that no longer engages our interest. Which

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is by no means to say that getting and spending are not of great moment, or that moral and spiritual sensibility have declined. As to the latter, indeed, it flourishes in a way that is perhaps unprecedented—it may well be that never before have so many people undertaken to live enlightened lives, to see through the illusions that society imposes, doing this quite easily, without strain or struggle, having been led to the perception of righteousness by what literature has told them of the social life. Whatever we may *do* as persons in the world, however we behave as getters and spenders, in our other capacity, as readers, as persons of moral sensibility, we *know* that the values of the world do not deserve our interest. We know it: we do not discover it, as readers once did, with the pleasing excitement that the novel generated as it led toward understanding. It is a thing taken for granted. That the world is a cheat, its social arrangements a sham, its rewards a sell, was patent to us from our moral infancy, whose first spoken words were, "Take away that bauble."

So entirely, and, as it were, so naturally do we withhold our assent from the world that we give it scarcely any credence. As getters and spenders we take it to be actual and there; as readers our imagination repels it, or at most accepts it as an absurdity. What in the first instance is a moral judgment on the world intensifies and establishes itself as a habit of thought to the point where it transcends its moral origin and becomes a metaphysical judgment.

More and more the contemporary reader requires of literature that it have a metaphysical rather than a moral aspect. Having come to take nullity for granted, he wants to be enlightened and entertained by statements about the nature of nothing, what its size is, how it is furnished, what services the management provides, what sort of conversation and amusements can go on in it. The novel in some of its experimental and theoretical developments can gratify the new taste, but this is more easily accomplished by the theater, which on frequent occasions in its long tradition has shown its natural affinity for ultimate and metaphysical considerations. By means of the irony which it generates merely through turning a conscious eye on its traditional devices of illusion, the theater easily escapes from its servitude to morality into free and radical play with the nature of existence as morality assumes it to be. That life is a dream, that all the world's a stage, that right you are if you think you are—such propositions can be forcibly demonstrated by the theater, which, defined by its function of inducing us to accept appearance as reality, delights in discovering in itself the power of showing that reality is but appearance, in effect nothing.

At least at one point in his life Joyce rated drama above all literary forms and made what he called the "dramatic emotion" the type of the "aesthetic emotion" in general. With the metaphysical potentialities of drama he was not concerned in an immediate way, but his famous account of the "dramatic emotion" has an obvious bearing upon the theater's ability to control, even to extirpate, the credence given to the worldly reality. Dedalus explains to Lynch that this emotion is "static," that it is brought into being by the "arrest" of the mind. "The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire and loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The aesthetic emotion (I use the general term) is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing."

Nothing, of course, could be further from the aesthetic of the novel in its classic phase. The novel was exactly, in Joyce's sense of the words, both pornographical and didactic, having the intention to generate desire and loathing, to urge the possession of the good, the abandonment of the bad. Assuming the prepotency of the will, the novel sought to educate and direct it by discriminating among the objects to which it might address itself. But Joyce characteristically represents the will in entropy, in its movement through ambiguity and paralysis to extinction. In *Ulysses*, for example, the objects of desire or intention of virtually all the characters are either of no great moment as the world judges, or they exist in unrealizable fantasy, or in the past.

There is one exception. The will of one person is represented as being, although momentarily in abeyance, on the point of becoming prepotent, and its object is represented as both capable of attainment and worth attaining: Stephen Dedalus means to become a great writer and we know, of course, that he does. The will of the artist is accepted in all its legendary power and authority, fully licensed. And the worldly traits of the particular artist Stephen Dedalus are entirely acknowledged—his bitter intention of fame, his pride, his vanity, his claim to unique personal superiority, touched with class feeling, his need to be ascendant in every situation. Yet the world to which these traits refer, that world to which Yeats—the admirer of Balzac!—gave so lively a recognition, in which the artist wins his prizes, has no existence in *Ulysses*. On the evidence that the book provides, there is nothing that can signalize the artist's achievement of success in life. There is no person, let alone a social agency, competent and empowered to judge his work and tell him that he has triumphed with it, that he has imposed his will upon the world and is now to be feared and loved. The honor he deserves cannot be accorded him, since the traditional signs of honor are wanting—there is no fine house to inhabit, no comfort or elegance that can gratify his heroic spirit after strenuous days, no acclaim or deference appro-

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priate to his genius. His prepotent will lifts him above the primitive life, the everlasting round of birth, copulation, and death, making him peerless: his only possible peers are a certain few of the preeminent dead, among whom God is one, on the whole the most congenial of the small company. It is chiefly in emulation of the work of this particular colleague that Joyce undertakes his own creation, intending that his book shall be read as men formerly "read" the "book of the universe." In his eyes a thousand years are as but a day, or the other way around, and the fall of the sparrow does not go unnoticed. The round of birth, copulation, and death receives his sanction under the aspect of eternity and in the awful silence of the infinite spaces, and his inscrutable but on the whole affectionate irony is directed upon all that men contrive in their cities for their survival, with a somewhat wryer glance toward what they contrive for their delight. Who that responds to the subtle power of his work can ever again, as a reader, give serious thought to the appointments of the house, the ribbon in the buttonhole, the cash in the bank and the stocks in the portfolio, the seemliness of the ordered life, the claims of disinterested action (except as they refer to certain small dealings between one person and another, especially between father and child), the fate of the nation, the hope of the future? And however else we read *Finnegans Wake,* we cannot fail to understand that it is a *contra-Philosophie der Geschichte,* that its transcendent genial silliness is a spoof on those segments of the solemn 19th-century imagination—History, and World Historical Figures, and that wonderful Will of theirs which, Hegel tells us, keeps the world in its right course toward the developing epiphany of *Geist.*

But if Joyce did indeed kill the 19th century, he was the better able to do so because the concerns and sentiments he destroyed made so considerable a part of the fabric of his being. To read his letters as we now have them is to be confirmed in our sense of his denial of the world, but it is also to become aware that what is denied was once affirmed with an extraordinary intensity. It is to understand how entirely Joyce was a man of the century in which he was born, how thoroughgoing was his commitment to its concerns and sentiments, how deeply rooted he was in its ethos and its mythos, its beliefs and its fantasies, its greedy desires, its dream of entering into the fair courts of life.

In 1957 Stuart Gilbert brought out a volume called *Letters of James Joyce** which gave us most, though not all, of the letters that were available at the time. Taken as a whole, the collection proved disappointing. It included relatively few letters of the early years, always likely to be the most interesting period of a writer's correspondence; by far the greater number date from the years of maturity, beginning at a time when, although not yet famous, Joyce was already a figure, and of these a great many are devoted to business in the unremitting and often trifling detail in which Joyce carried it on. Nothing that bears upon Joyce's life can fail to command attention, but there is not much in Mr. Gilbert's collection that goes beyond the well-known public aspects of the career to make the appeal of intimacy.

It is true that some reviewers remarked on a quality of warmth and gaiety that they found in the letters and on how much more "human" this showed Joyce to be than had hitherto been supposed. By his middle years Joyce had developed a talent, if not for friendship, then at least for friendliness; whatever else his friends may have been to him, they were his aides, adjutants, and ambassadors, and in the letters in which he did business with them and through them there sounds a note of geniality, often of a whimsical kind, which, as the reviewers noted, is at variance with what is often reported of his forbidding reserve. But it is possible to feel that the genial air is rather *voulu,* even contrived,† and at least one reviewer put the matter of the "humanness" in a qualified way—Philip Toynbee said no more than that the letters "reveal a far less inhuman man than the myth had led us to believe." They may be thought to reveal a man who, out of his sense of what is seemly, or perhaps for reasons of policy, wished to conceal the full extent of his "inhumanness," of his detachment from the affections. On the evidence of the first published letters only one event of his middle age seems ever actually to have reached Joyce, his daughter's extreme mental illness. Even here the *apatheia* is to some degree in force, in part through the self-deception as to the true state of affairs that Joyce practiced, although we are in no doubt about the bitterness of his grief.** For the rest, the personal life seems to have been burned out, calcined. The difficulties of the once obsessing marriage appear to have been settled one way or another and no new erotic interests are to be discerned. The dialectic of temperament has come to an end—there are scarcely any indications of an interplay between the self and the life around it, the existence of which is recognized only as the world rejects or accepts Joyce's art.

Immediately after the appearance of Mr. Gilbert's collection there came to light a great trove of Joyce's letters, preserved through many vicissitudes. They were available to Richard Ellmann in the research for his definitive life of Joyce and Professor Ellmann has edited them with the eru-

* Viking, 440 pp., $10.00.

† The letters to Frank Budgen are exceptional in suggesting Joyce's actual enjoyment of a relationship with another person.

** Joyce's long refusal to recognize the seriousness of Lucia's condition was abetted by the doctors, who, whether out of ignorance or compunction, seem never to have offered a firm diagnosis.

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dition and intelligence that make his biography the superlative work it is. The two collections have been conjoined to make a new *Letters of James Joyce* in three volumes,* of which Mr. Gilbert's is now Volume I, Professor Ellmann's Volumes II and III. The arrangement is anomalous and of course awkward, since the collections cover the same span of time although in different degrees of completeness. But the practical nuisance should not be exaggerated. The Joyce scholars are inured to worse difficulties than those to which the arrangement subjects them. And the general reader will inevitably conclude that Volumes II and III make the corpus of the *Letters* to which Volume I serves as a supplement. His conclusion will be based not merely on the greater scope of the later volumes but on the extent of their interest, which is beyond comparison with that of their predecessor.

THE LETTERS of the mature years that are given in Professor Ellmann's collection do not change in any decisive way the impression made by those of Volume I, although they do modify it in some respects. It turns out not to be true, for example, that there are no moments of crisis in the marriage after the removal to Paris. In 1922 Nora Joyce went off to Ireland with the children, threatening that she would not return. Joyce writes in desperate appeal to "my darling, my love, my queen," telling her that the check for her fur is on the way, that he will live anywhere with her so long as he can be "alone with her dear self without family and without friends. Either this must occur or we must part for ever, though it will break my heart." He goes on to report in detail his "fainting fit in Miss Beach's shop," and concludes: "O my dearest, if you would only turn to me even now and read that terrible book which has now broken the heart in my breast† and take me to yourself alone to do with me what you will!"

The substance of the marital correspondence at forty is not different from that of the twenties: the same belief in the importance of gifts, especially of fur; the extravagant demand for devotion made through the avowal of infantile weakness; the plea to be dealt with ruthlessly in his total and pathic dependence. But as compared with the earlier letters of similar import that we now have, the energy of this one seems but dutiful, almost perfunctory. It appears early in Volume III and is the last expression not only of erotic feeling but of strong personal emotion of any kind.

From here on, the new letters of the later years are at one with those of the 1957 collection in suggesting that, however powerful Joyce's creative will continued to be, his affective will had been outlived. "*Only disconnect!*" had long been an avowed principle of his life, but not until now had it been put fully in force. It is true that the paternal tenderness and solicitude do not abate, that the form of courteous geniality is maintained, that an enterprise of helpfulness is not precluded, such as involved Joyce with the career of the tenor Sullivan, and we must suppose that some other magnetism in addition to that of his genius drew many people to his service. But nothing in the ordinary way of "humanness" contradicts our sense that the letters of the years of fame were written by a being who had departed this life as it is generally known and had become such a ghost as Henry James and Yeats imagined, a sentient soul that has passed from temporal existence into nullity yet still has a burden of energy to discharge, a destiny still to be worked out.

We are tempted to deal with the uncanny condition by bringing it into the comfortable circle of morality. Joyce's disconnection from the world, we may want to say, is the ground of his indomitable courage, before which we stand in awed admiration. The man who had ventured and won so much with *Ulysses* now pushes on with *Finnegans Wake* under the encroaching shadow of blindness and to the disapproval of his patron and virtually all his supporters: how else save by a disconnection amounting to "inhumanness" can he pursue the enterprise? Or our moralizing takes the adversary tack and notes the occasions when the disconnection issues in an ugly coarseness of behavior in regard to others. Joyce, who concerned himself with every detail of the promotion of his own books and enlisted everyone he could in the enterprise, when asked to support one of the posthumous novels of Italo Svevo, whose work he admired, not only refuses the request but sneers at the very idea of literary publicity. When his daughter-in-law, Giorgio's first wife, suffers an extreme mental collapse, he writes of the disaster in anger and describes the deranged conduct with contemptuous bitterness.

Eventually, however, we come to feel that no moral judgment can really be to the point of Joyce's state of being in his latter years. And psychology seems as limited in its pertinence as morality. It is inevitable that psychological speculation will be attracted to the often strange and extreme emotional phenomena that the new letters record, especially to what the early ones tell us of the extravagant energy of affective will that was to devolve into the disconnection from the world, the existence in nullity. Neither Joyce's representation of himself as Dedalus, nor Professor Ellmann's detailed account of his youthful temperament, nor yet the two taken together quite prepare us for the intimacy and violence of Joyce's early relation to the world, the urgency with which he sought to requisition the world's goods. And certainly the devolution (if that is the word) from this early egotism of the world to the later egotism of nullity is a biographical event

* Viking. Volume II, 472 pp.; Volume III, 584 pp. Banded, $25.00. Volumes I, II, III, boxed, $35.00.

† Even two years later Nora had not yet consented to read *Ulysses*.

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that asks for explanation. But however brilliant and even true may be the insights into the disposition of the internal forces that brought it about, they will fail to do justice to its significance, which is finally not personal but cultural. The process recorded by the letters proposes itself as a paradigm of the 19th-century will *in extremis*. It leads us to reflect less on what transpired in the life of James Joyce than on what could formerly happen and cannot happen again—never in our time will a young man focus this much power of love and hate into so sustained a rage of effectual intention as Joyce was capable of, so ferocious an ambition, so nearly absolute a commitment of himself to himself.

Joyce was of course not exceptional in being a continuator of the titanism of the 19th-century artistic personality. The literary culture of the first quarter of the 20th century is differentiated from that of our own time by nothing so much as the grandiosity, both in purpose and in achievement, of its preeminent figures. In this respect their sense of life is alien from ours and is not uncommonly felt to alienate them from us. In one point of temperament, in the unremitting energy of their inner-direction, they have a closer affinity with their 19th-century predecessors than with their successors. But as compared with Joyce, none of the great modern chieftains of art put himself so directly and, as one might say, so *naively*, in the line of the powerful personalities of the age before his own. None so cherished the purpose of imposing himself upon the world, of being a king and riding in triumph through Persepolis.

If Joyce did indeed derive the impetus to his achievement from his acceptance of the ethos and mythos of the 19th century, a first salient example is his response to an idea that we take to be characteristic of the ideology of the period, the idea of the nation. One of the best-known things about Joyce is his ambivalence toward Ireland, of which the hatred was as relentless as the love was unfailing. With this passionate relationship his lust for preeminence and fame is bound up, and the more so because his erotic life is intricately involved with it. He is twenty-seven and on his first visit to Dublin after his exile and he is writing to Nora, telling her of the part she plays in his inspiration. "My darling," he says, "tonight I was in the Gresham Hotel and was introduced to about twenty people and to all of them the same story was told: that I was going to be the great writer of the future in my country. All the noise and flattery around me hardly moved me. I thought I heard my country calling to me or her eyes were turned toward me expectantly." He goes on to tell Nora that she is more important to him than the world and that everything comes from her. But in his thought of fame he cannot separate her from the nation, the "race": "O take me into your soul of souls and then I will indeed become the poet of my race." And among the things he has loved in her—"the image of the beauty of the world, the mystery and beauty of life itself . . . the images of spiritual purity and pity which I believed in as a boy"—there are "the beauty and doom of the race of whom I am a child." He calls her "my love, my life, my star, my little strange-eyed Ireland!"

And yet, of course, "I loathe Ireland and the Irish. They themselves stare at me in the street though I was born among them. Perhaps they read my hatred in my eyes." The hatred was of the essence of his ambition quite as much as the love. Three years later he is again in Dublin and he writes: "The Abbey Theater will be open and they will give plays of Yeats and Synge. You have a right to be there because you are my bride and I am one of the writers of this generation who are perhaps creating at last a conscience in the soul of this wretched race."

Some considerable part of Joyce's ambition consisted of what the 19th century called aspiration and conceived to be a mode of feeling peculiarly appropriate to generous minds, artists perhaps especially but also soldiers, statesmen, engineers, industrialists. Aspiration was the desire for fame through notable and arduous achievement. The end in view which defined it was the realization of one's own powers. That in order to reach this end one might be involved in competition with others, seeking to surpass and overcome them, was a frequent but accidental circumstance of aspiration which was not thought to qualify its noble disinterestedness. That this is a reasonable way of looking at the matter is suggested by the astonishing letter the nineteen-year-old Joyce addressed to Ibsen. He makes a full and grandiose communication of his admiration and then goes on to say to the sick old man, "Your work on earth draws to a close and you are near the silence. It is growing dark for you." But there is a comfort that he can offer, the assurance that One—an unnamed but unmistakable One—comes after to carry on the great work. It is in all conscience a crueller letter than the young writer chose to know, yet the competition with the Father, the Old King, is sanctioned not only by tradition but by the very nature of life, and Joyce invests it with an absurd but genuine nobility by which the Master Builder, after a wince or two, might well have been grimly pleased.

But Joyce's competitiveness, which was extreme, was not always, not characteristically, in the grand style; as it showed itself in his relations with his age-mates it was often vindictive and coarse. Through all the early years in Trieste and Rome, Joyce lived in bitter jealous hatred of his former friends and companions in Dublin. He cannot mention them and their little successes without an expression of disgust: "Their writings and their lives nauseate [me] to the point of vomiting." The new letters make clear to how great

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an extent Joyce in his youth conceived of his art as a weapon to be used in personal antagonism, especially in vengeance. "Give me for Christ' sake á pen and an ink-bottle and some peace of mind and then, by the crucified Jaysus, if I don't sharpen that little pen and dip it into fermented ink and write tiny little sentences about the people who betrayed me send me to hell." The chief object of his bitterness, of course, was Gogarty, from whom, after the quarrel, he would accept no tender of reconciliation. It was his belief that the man who had so terribly offended him sought to make peace out of fear of how he would be delineated—the belief finds expression in the first chapter of *Ulysses*: "He fears the lancet of my art as I fear that of his. Cold steelpen."—and as early as 1905 it was assumed by Joyce's Dublin friends that a great revenge was in train; the form it would take was already known. "[Elwood] says," writes Stanislaus Joyce, "he would not like to be Gogarty when you come to the Tower episode. Thanks be to God he never kicked your arse or anything." Gogarty himself had every expectation that revenge would be duly taken, and Joyce coolly confirmed him in this; he reports that in refusing Gogarty's attempt to renew the friendship, he had said: "I bear you no ill will. I believe you have some points of good nature. You and I of 6 years ago are both dead. But I must write as I have felt!" To which Gogarty replied, "I don't care a damn what you say of me so long as it is literature."*

The unremitting bitterness with which Joyce remembered and commemorated his relation with Gogarty serves to remind us of the great authority that the ideal of male friendship formerly had. In this, as in so many other respects, the 19th century maintained its connection with the courtly cultures of earlier epochs. Out of the dream of the true friend arose the possibility of the false friend, and it is an element of the *Heldenleben*, as the 19th century understood the genre, that the hero is beset by treacherous comrades envious of his powers and eager to subvert them. Had these dwarfish natures been lacking in the actuality of his life, Joyce would have been quick to supply the want. His genius throve upon his paranoia, which was capable of anything—it is quite in his style to say in an early letter to Lady Gregory that the college authorities were determined that he should not study medicine, "wishing I dare say to prevent me from securing any position of ease from which I might speak out my heart." A belief in a hostile environment, in persecution and personal betrayal, was necessary to his mission. But in point of fact the false friends and the malice of their envy were real enough; they were fostered by Dublin life before they were cherished by Joyce as a condition of his art and the testimony of his being a dedicated spirit, singled out. Long before Joyce had anything like a career his promise of genius was taken for granted by those who knew him and Stanislaus's diary records the envy with which he was regarded by his contemporaries. In his early days of exile, when his thoughts turned homeward, it was to inquire what these lesser impotent beings said of his courage, his freedom, his unconventional marriage, and, as time passed, his approach to success. Their mischievous impulses in relation to him came fully to light in the strange episode of his friend Cosgrove telling him, falsely and seemingly out of the gratuitous impulse to play Iago to this Othello, that before the elopement Nora had been unfaithful to him, a communication that for a time had all its intended effect of making chaos come again.

THE SOCIAL life of late 19th-century Dublin as Joyce's class situation permitted him to know it was obviously in most respects quite elementary, but it was certainly not wanting in concern with social status, in judging who was "better" and stood higher than whom, and to such questions the young Joyce gave the most solemn attention. It was surely an important circumstance of the last interview with Gogarty that it took place in Gogarty's elaborate house and that the former friend, now set up in medical practice, well-to-do and well married, should have invited Joyce to come with him in his motorcar to have lunch in his country home. The social advantages that Gogarty had previously enjoyed, perhaps especially his having gone to Oxford, were of the greatest moment to Joyce, who was at constant pains to enforce the idea that, when it came to social establishment, Stephen Dedalus, if the truth were seen, was the superior of anyone.† Joyce was in nothing so much a man of the 19th century as in the sensitivity of his class feelings. No less than Dickens he was concerned to be a *gentleman* and he was as little shy as Dickens about using the word, the Victorian force of which maintained itself for at least two of the Joyces in the face of the family's rapid downward mobility. In the midst of an expression of disgust with his situation at Rome James remarks to Stanislaus, "I feel somehow that

* In the event this proved not to be true—Gogarty cared many a damn when *Ulysses* appeared. As well he might, if only because Joyce led all the world to believe forever that he and not Gogarty-Mulligan was the rightful tenant of the tower and that the famous key was his: any statement of the fact of the matter, that the opposite was the case, will always be received with surprise and incredulity and soon forgotten. Such is the power of the literary imagination in the service of self-justification. Partisans of simple justice—alas, there are virtually none of Gogarty—may find some encouragement in the display of the actual lease in the tower; that a signboard calls the tower James Joyce's should not dismay them: the rights of the ultimate possession are now absolute.

† In the tower scene Mulligan tells Stephen, "You know, Dedalus, you have the real Oxford manner." And he speculates that this is why Haines, the Englishman who is staying with them, can't make Stephen out. Haines is rich and himself an Oxford man and Mulligan twice remarks that he thinks Stephen isn't a gentleman.

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I am what Pappie said I wasn't [,] a gentleman."* He was at the time working in a bank as a correspondence clerk; he lived with his wife and infant son in a single small room; often his wages did not meet his weekly expenses and the letters of the period are chiefly to Stanislaus in Trieste, their whole burden being that money must be sent at once. The conversation of his fellow clerks, as he describes it, is simian; he has no ordinarily decent social intercourse with anyone, yet he finds it in his heart to describe his circumstances not as unfit for a human being but as unfit for a gentleman.

His feeling for the social forms could be strict, often in a genteel, lower-middle-class way. Although in 1910 black-edged writing paper was still used by proper people in a period of mourning, the faintly barbaric custom was not universally observed, but Joyce, at the death of his uncle John Murray, thought it necessary to his sense of how things should be done.† When he was virtually starving during his first sojourn in Paris, he regretted that he could not attend the Irish Ball because he had no dress suit. He is still working as a Berlitz teacher in Trieste and the family in Dublin is on the verge of destitution, but he directs his father to arrange to sit for his portrait. The family crest was his treasured possession.

At the present time feelings about class in their old form are in at least literary abeyance and it is hard to remember the force they once had and the extent to which they defined the character and aspirations of the artist.** In an age when the middle classes seemed to be imposing their stamp upon the world, a young writer was led to set store by what he imagined to be the aristocratic qualities of grace, freedom, and indifference to public opinion, and the aristocratic mode of life seemed the model for what all men's lives should be. It was the rare writer who did not think himself to be "well born" in some sense of the phrase, and if he had any reason to think that he was actually of distinguished blood, he was pretty sure to find the circumstance of value. George Moore said no more than the simple truth when he remarked that "Yeats's belief in his lineal descent from the great Duke of Ormonde was part of his poetic equipment." Writing in admiration of Tolstoy, Joyce associates his genius with his class position and his ability to remember "the Christian name of his great-great-grandfather." And the young man who felt himself excluded from the patrician literary circle of Dublin and expressed his resentment in rude mockery of its members shared Yeats's dream of the culture—the word is Joyce's own—of the great houses and the ancient families. Writing to Nora, who had been a chambermaid in a Dublin hotel when he had first met her and whose lack of grammar he was not above mocking to his brother, he explains to her the inspiration of *Chamber Music*: "You were not in a sense the girl for whom I had dreamed and written the verses you now find so enchanting. She was perhaps (as I saw her in my imagination) a girl fashioned into a curious grave beauty by the culture of generations before her, the woman for whom I wrote poems like 'Gentle Lady' or 'Thou leanest to the shell of night.'" He goes on, surely in entire sincerity: "But then I saw that the beauty of your soul outshone that of my verses. There was something in you higher than anything I had put into them. And so for this reason the book of verses is for you. It holds the desire of my youth, and you, darling, were the fulfillment of that desire." Yet the discrepancy between the robust, barely literate chambermaid who had to be told not to copy her love-letters out of a letter-book and the girl fashioned into a curious grave beauty by her lineage was often a pain to Joyce, and much as he needed Nora's earthy strength, he flinched at the rudeness—so he called it—that went with it. It was certain that he was a gentleman, but whatever else Nora was, she was, alas, no lady.

That Joyce's preoccupation with his social status should go along with an avowed interest in subverting the society in which he held his valued rank does not make a contradiction. It was quite common in the 19th century for gifted men to find sanction for their subversive intentions toward society in such aristocracy or gentility as they could claim.†† But that Joyce should ever have been political at all will for most of his readers make an occasion for surprise. For a few years of his young manhood, between the ages of twenty-two and twenty-five, Joyce called himself a socialist. Again and again in his letters to Stanislaus he insists on the importance to the artist of a radical

* The occasion of the judgment was John Joyce's reading *Gas From a Burner*. Stanislaus seems not to have shared the social feelings of his father and elder brother. Perhaps it was his puritanical rationalism that led him to adopt a rather plebeian stance The youngest surviving Joyce brother, Charles, apparently laid no continuing claim to being a gentleman; when last we hear of him he is a postal clerk in London. The idea of social status was part of the fabric of the Joyce family life—it is well known how preoccupied John Joyce was with the superiority of his own family to his wife's, which of course had some bearing on James's choice of a wife whose pretensions to breeding were notably less than his own.

† Joyce took account in *Ulysses* of his response to the claims of funeral pomps. "He can't wear them," Mulligan says when his offer of a pair of gray trousers has been refused by Dedalus because he is in mourning for his mother. "Etiquette is etiquette. He kills his mother but he can't wear gray trousers."

** A few years ago I had occasion to remark in an essay that my students, no matter what their social origins, were not prevented by Yeats's snobbery from responding to his poetry. One reviewer took me sternly to task for obscuring the transcendent achievement of the great poet by speaking of him as a snob. What made especially interesting the view of life and letters implied by the rebuke was that the reviewer was Leon Edel, the biographer of Henry James.

†† This was especially true of the anarchists in Russia, France, and Italy.

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political position: "I believe that Ibsen and Hauptmann separate from the herd of writers because of their political aptitude—eh?" "It is a mistake for you to imagine that my political opinions are those of a universal lover: but they are those of a socialistic artist." He scolds Stanislaus for not sharing his "detestation of the stupid, dishonest, tyrannical and cowardly burgher class." He explains the opposition of the Church to "the quite unheretical theory of socialism" as being an expression of the belief that a socialist government would expropriate ecclesiastical "landed estates . . . and invested moneys." His cogent objection to the Irish nationalist movement is that it takes no account of economic realities and is not aware that "if the Irish question exists, it exists for the Irish proletariat chiefly." And it is a further black mark against Gogarty that his political views exclude economic considerations. "Gogarty would jump into the Liffey to save a man's life but he seems to have little hesitation in condemning generations to servitude."*

Joyce never committed himself to political action or association, and although he had a knowledgeable interest in the Italian radical parties, he seems never to have put himself to the study of socialist theory; the only reference to Karl Marx occurs in the course of an excited and rather confused account of the apocalyptic Jewish imagination derived from Ferrero's *Young Europe*. By 1907 his socialism had evaporated, leaving as its only trace the sweet disposition of Leopold Bloom's mind to imagine the possibility of rational and benevolent social behavior and the brotherhood of man. This, however, is a residue of some importance in the history of literature: it makes *Ulysses* unique among modern classics for its sympathy with progressive social ideas.

In one of his early poems Yeats speaks of the places where men meet "to talk of love and politics." To us at our remove in time the conjunction of the two topics of conversation seems quaint, for of course by love Yeats did not mean the rather touching interfusion of *eros* and *agape* that young people have lately come to use as a ground of social and political dissidence: he meant a love much more personal and egotistic, that ultimate relation between a man and a woman the conception of which had descended from courtly love, the "gay science" of the late Middle Ages, to become one of the powerful myths of the 19th century. Its old force has greatly diminished, perhaps to the point of extinction. No matter how gravely and idealistically we may use our contemporary names for the relation between a man and a woman, "sex" and "marriage," and even the phrase that is a vestige of the old name, "in love with," do not suggest, as "love" did for an age in whose sensibility *Tristan and Isolde* occupied a central position, the idea of life realized and transfigured by the erotic connection, fulfilled by its beauty, sustained by the energy and fidelity that constituted its ethos.† In the 19th century, politics was a new activity of free spirits and it naturally found affinity with a conception of love that made large promises of perceptivity, liberty, and happiness. Love was understood to be art's true source and best subject, and those who lived for love and art did harm to no one, lived the right life of humanity: so Tosca in a passion that reaches B-flat informs the tyrant Scarpia. The operatic example is much in point, for opera was the genre in which love and political virtue joined hands to make a lyric affirmation of life. The contemptuous indifference in which opera is held by our intellectual culture is not qualified by recognition of its political tendency. For Joyce, as everyone knows, opera was a passion. With a most engaging simplicity he gave the genre the response it asked for; he found it, as people used to say, ravishing. He would have been astonished and dismayed by the contemporary snootiness to Puccini; he held *Madame Butterfly* to be a work of transcendent beauty and power, most especially the aria "*Un bel dì*" which at one period seems to have woven itself into the very fabric of his emotional life; when Butterfly sang the "romance of her hope" of what would come to her over the sea, his soul (as he wrote bitterly to Nora, who was not similarly moved) "sway[ed] with languor and longing": in the face of the harshness of circumstance, life is affirmed in erotic ecstasy, as when, in *A Portrait of the Artist*, Stephen has sight of the girl on the strand, gazing out to sea. For Joyce, as still for many men of the time in which he was young, human existence was justified by the rapture—lost archaic word!—of love.

PERHAPS NOTHING in Joyce's life is more poignant and more indicative of the extent to which his imagination was shaped by the mythos of his time than the episode, on the threshold of his middle age, in which the famous vision of the lovely girl standing with high-kilted skirts at the water's edge, the most grandiose of the epiphanies, seemed to have presented itself as an attainable actuality. Martha Fleischmann was a young woman, seemingly Jewish, though not so in fact, beautiful, provocative but apparently not disposed to go beyond elaborate flirtation, whom Joyce came to know in Zurich in the autumn of 1918. As Martha recalled their meeting nearly a quarter of a century later, the scene stands all ready for the librettist. She was coming home "one evening at dusk" when a passerby stopped and looked at her "with an expression of such wonder on his face that she hesitated for just a moment before entering the house." The stranger spoke, explaining

* Joyce's disgust with Gogarty on political grounds was made the more intense by Gogarty's anti-Semitism.

† For an account of what *Tristan and Isolde* meant to the epoch, see Elliot Zuckermann's admirable *The First Hundred Years of Wagner's Tristan*, Columbia University Press, 1964.

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his astonishment by saying that she reminded him of a girl he had once seen "standing on the beach of his home country."* Martha's erotic temperament was ambiguous to a degree. She had a devoted "guardian," as she called him, and he expressed jealousy of her relation with Joyce, but there is some question as to whether her connection with this man was sexual in any ordinary sense of the word. On one occasion Joyce addressed her as "Nausikaa," signing himself "Odysseus,"† and it would seem that the Gerty MacDowell of the "Nausikaa" episode of *Ulysses* commemorates her genteel narcissism and sentimentality. Joyce's own erotic disposition at this time was scarcely of a more direct kind. His lust, like Mr. Bloom's, was chiefly of the eye and the mind. What seems to have been the climactic assignation of these two fantasts of love took place in Frank Budgen's studio on February 2, which was Joyce's birthday and the feast of Candlemas, and Joyce borrowed from a Jewish friend a *menorah* so that he might gaze on Martha's beauty by candlelight, perhaps the sole intention of the meeting.** With the passage of years the exquisite virgin, *La Princesse lointaine*, came to be represented in the great "Nausikaa" episode as nothing more than the sad, silly figment of ladies' magazines, and the dream of love-and-beauty as an occasion of masturbation. But at the time his feelings for Martha seemed to Joyce to challenge comparison with Dante's for Beatrice and Shakespeare's for the Dark Lady; at least he meant them to. "And through the night of the bitterness of my soul," he wrote in the last of his letters to Martha, "the kisses of your lips fell on my heart, soft as rosepetals gentle as dew," and concludes, "O rosa mistica [*sic*], ora pro me."

One of the four letters is mutilated—we are told that Martha "tore off the lower right-hand edge of the second sheet . . . because it contained what she considered an indelicate expression." The judgment on the offending word or phrase cannot be set aside out of hand as one of Martha's neurotic gentilities. The chances are that Joyce did actually write an indelicacy, even an obscenity, for his concern that the erotic object and situation be of an extreme refinement and beauty went together with a no less exigent desire for all that is commonly thought to sully, besmirch, and degrade the erotic activity, and he derived a special pleasure from expressing this desire in writing.

The dialectic between the essential innocence and the essential shamefulness of the sexual act has in our time lost much of its old force, at least overtly. If nowadays we obey the command of Blake's Los to "Consider Sexual Organization," it does not seem naturally to follow, as the demiurge thought it would, that we "hide . . . in the dust" for shame. Crazy Jane's observation that love has pitched his mansion in the place of excrement is received as an interesting reminder of the actual state of affairs rather than as the expression of a distressing (or exciting) thought in the forefront of consciousness. The words of Yeats's poem echo those of another divine utterance in *Jerusalem*: "For I will make their places of love and joy excrementitious," but the circumstance as Yeats refers to it is not conceived to be a curse: we understand Yeats to be remarking on an anomaly that makes human existence more complex and difficult than his long celebration of the *Rosa Mystica* would suggest, or more "ironic," or more "tragic," but for that reason more substantive and the more interesting. His sense of the shameful arrangements of the erotic life stands midway between the neutralizing view of them that our contemporary educated consciousness seems determined to take and the eager response to them made by Joyce, for whom shame was a chief condition of sexual fulfilment.

IN THE COURSE of the two visits he made to Ireland in 1909, Joyce in his letters to Nora ran through the whole gamut of his erotic emotions and in full voice. Within a week of his first arrival in Dublin, Cosgrove imparted the news of Nora's double dealing in the betrothal time, and although the false friend spoke only of kisses, Joyce of course imagined more and questioned whether Nora had actually come to him a virgin—"I remember that there was very little blood that night. . . ."—and whether Giorgio is in truth his son. He is shattered by the dreadful revelation—"I shall cry for days"—but a fortnight has not passed before he can report blandly that everything has been cleared up by Byrne's having said that Cosgrove's tale is "all a 'blasted lie' "; and after having called himself a "worthless fellow," he vows to be "Worthy of your love, dearest," and goes on to speak of a shipment of cocoa he has sent, that same cocoa that he later urges Nora to drink a good deal of so that she will increase the size of "certain parts" of her body, pleasing him

* The quoted passages are from Professor Straumann's account of his interview with Martha when, in Zurich in 1941, she called to inquire about selling the four letters and the postcard that Joyce had written to her. Professor Straumann did not make the purchase on that occasion, but he did so at a later time, in 1943, when, Martha being ill, her affairs were in the charge of her sister—at least he bought the letters; the postcard had vanished. Professor Straumann's account of the relationship of Martha and Joyce appears as a preface to the letters as given in Volume II, pp. 426-436; it is less full and circumstantial than Professor Ellmann's earlier account in his biography.

† The salutation and the subscription were, Professor Straumann says, the whole message of the lost postcard.

** Candlemas commemorates the purification of the Virgin Mary and the presentation of Christ in the Temple. "The blessing of candles is now the distinctive rite of this day. . . . Beeswax candles, which are blessed, distributed, and lit whilst the Nunc Dimittis is sung, are carried in a procession commemorating the entrance of Christ, the 'True Light' (cf. Jn. I.9) into the Temple."—*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. In his second letter to Martha, remarking on his impression that she was a Jewess, Joyce says, "If I am wrong, you must not be offended. Jesus Christ put on his human body: in the womb of a Jewish woman."

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by becoming more truly womanly. His marital resentments are bitter and explicit: Nora, whose great fault is her rudeness, had called him an imbecile, had disagreed with his expressed opinion that priests are disgusting, had been indifferent to "*Un bel di*"; his apologies, when his recriminations have proved offensive, are abject. He is much given to expressions of tender and poetic regard and is engagingly proud of the courtly ingenuity of a gift of jewelry he has designed and had executed, a necklace of gold links, five cubes of old ivory and an ivory plaque bearing in ancient lettering words from one of his poems, which is to symbolize the lovers' years together and their sadness and suffering when they are divided; his Christmas present is *Chamber Music* copied out in his own hand on parchment, bound with his family crest, on the cover the lovers' interlaced initials. But his lively imagination of the elegances of love goes along with fantasies and solicitations that, as he says, make him the object of his own disgust and, he insists on supposing, of Nora's.

PROFESSOR Ellmann has not found it possible to carry out his intention of publishing in its entirety the group of obscene love-letters from Dublin preserved in the Cornell Library. What he is able to publish does indeed, as he says, suggest the tenor of these extraordinary documents (the adjective is Joyce's) but not the force and the strange dignity that they seemed to me to have when I read them at Cornell some years ago. It may be, of course, that my memory plays me false, but I recall the letters read in the completeness of the holograph as making the effect of having been written under a more driving compulsion, a more exigent possession, than appears in the curtailed printed version. Perhaps it was the holograph itself that contributed to the impressiveness, enforcing the situation in something like the awesomeness that Joyce himself felt it to have: the man who may well be the greatest literary genius of his age submits to the necessity of taking in hand his sacred cold steel pen and with it to sully sheet after virgin sheet of paper with the filthy words that express all that he feels in the way of delight at the dirtiness of his exalted nature. The words themselves have for him a terrifying potency. One of his letters has induced Nora in her reply to use what he can refer to in no other way than as "a certain word." The sight of it, he says, excites him terribly—"There is something obscene and lecherous in the very look of the letters. The sound of it too is like the act itself, brief, brutal, irresistible and devilish."

His longed-for perversities and depravities—we had best call them that without permissive apologies, since he thought of them so and we ought not deny the ground of his pleasure—were not of an especially esoteric kind. He expresses the wish to be flogged and not merely in show but fiercely, to the end of his feeling real pain; he blames himself for writing "filth" and instructs Nora, if she is insulted by it, to bring him to his senses "with the lash, as you have done before." Nora is an "angel" and a "saint" who guides him to his great destiny, and he longs to "nestle" in her womb, and he seeks to "degrade" and "deprave" her, he wants her to be insolent and cruel and obscene. Perhaps the controlling and to him most puzzling and most significant component of his polymorphous perversity is his delight in the excrementitiousness of the places of love and joy, what he called his "wild beast-like craving . . . for every secret and shameful part" of his wife's body, "for every odor and act of it." "Are you offended because I said I loved to look at the brown stain that comes behind on your girlish white drawers? I suppose you think me a filthy wretch."

No one, I think, will be so armored in objectivity as not to be taken aback by the letters. But their shocking interest fades as we become habituated to them, or to the idea of them. In the way of all drastic personal facts, especially in our time, they cease to be dismaying or amazing soon after they are brought into the light of common day and permitted to assume their institutional status —one might say their prestige—as biographical data. What does not fade, however, is the interest of the literary use to which Joyce put the erotic tendencies that the letters disclose and indulge.

To a reader of *Ulysses* nothing in the substance of the letters comes as a surprise. All the fantasies are familiar to us through our having made acquaintance with them in the mind of Leopold Bloom. But what exists in the mind of Mr. Bloom is of a quite different import from the apparently identical thing as it exists in the mind of James Joyce or might exist in the mind of his surrogate Stephen Dedalus. The reader of the letters will not fail to conclude that it required a considerable courage for Joyce to write them. His doing so went against the grain of a decisive and cherished part of his nature, his austere, almost priestly propriety. "As you know, dearest," he writes in one of the letters, "I never use obscene phrases in speaking. You have never heard me, have you, utter an unfit word before others. When men tell in my presence here filthy or lecherous stories I hardly smile." Yet he put on paper and sent through the mail what was not to be countenanced and, although he urged Nora to be watchful in guarding the secrecy of the letters, since he did not destroy them when he might have done so, he must be thought to have wished that they be preserved. One thing, however, he would not —could not—do: attribute the fantasies of the letters to the mind of Stephen Dedalus.

By assigning them to Mr. Bloom, he of course quite changes their character. As elements of Mr. Bloom's psyche, they become comic, which is to say morally neutral. Our laughter, which is gentle, cognizant, forgiving, affectionate, has the effect of firmly distancing them and at the same time of

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bringing them within the circle of innocence and acceptability. We understand that nothing very terrible is here, nothing awesome, or devilish, or wild-beast-like—only what we call, with a relishing, domesticating chuckle, *human*. And the chuckle comes the more easily because we recognize in Mr. Bloom, as we are intended to, the essential innocence of the child; his polymorphous perversity is appropriate to his infantile state. This innocence, it would appear, is part of Joyce's conception of Jews in general, who, he seems to have felt, through some natural grace were exempt from the complexities of the moral life as it was sustained by Christians. Writing to Stanislaus of his son having been born early, with nothing prepared, he says, "However, our landlady is a Jewess and gave us everything we wanted." The implication is that a Christian might or might not have provided the necessary things; Christian kindness would result from the making of a choice between doing the good deed and not doing it, and would therefore, by the Aristotelian definition, be moral; but a Jewish good deed was a matter of instinct, natural rather than moral. It is in natural goodness rather than in morality that Mr. Bloom has his being, and in the ambience of his mind the perverse fantasies have nothing of the fearsome significance they had for Joyce when he entertained them.

It is possible to say that the translation of the fantasies as they existed in the mind of James Joyce, and might have existed in the mind of Stephen Dedalus, into what they become in the mind of Leopold Bloom is a derogation of Joyce's courage as an artist. A Stephen Dedalus whose rigorous moral being is assailed and torn by sinful desires is readily received as a heroic figure so long as the desires can be supposed sinful in a received way. But a polymorphous-perverse hero would make a difficulty, would be thought a contradiction in terms. For Joyce the Aristotelian categories of tragedy and comedy, the one showing men as "better," i.e., more dignified, than they really are, the other showing men as "worse," i.e., more ignoble, than they really are, had an authority that, at the time of *Ulysses*, was not to be controverted.

It is also possible to say that Joyce's refusal to assign the perverse fantasies to Stephen is a derogation of personal courage. A polymorphous-perverse Leopold Bloom stands as testimony to his author's astonishing powers of imagination, of sympathetic insight into the secret places of nature at the furthest remove from his own. But a polymorphous-perverse Stephen Dedalus must advertise the polymorphous perversity of the author whose fictive surrogate he is inevitably understood to be. To this personal disclosure Joyce could not consent.

His fictional disposition of the polymorphous perversity must make a salient question in any attempt to understand the mind of James Joyce. What I have called—with, I should make plain, no pejorative force—a derogation of courage is an answer that has a kind of provisional cogency. But a comment on the obscene letters made by Professor Ellmann in his Introduction seems to me to initiate an explanation that goes deeper. Professor Ellmann says of the letters that they have an "ulterior purpose," that Joyce, in writing them, had an intention beyond immediate sexual gratification. One thing he intended was "to anatomize and reconstitute and crystallize the emotion of love." And, Professor Ellmann says, "he goes further still; like Richard Rowan in *Exiles*, he wishes to possess his wife's soul, and have her possess his, in nakedness. To know someone else in love and hate, beyond vanity and remorse, *beyond human possibility almost* [my italics], is his extravagant desire."

If this is so, as I think it is, it brings the obscene letters into accord with what I have proposed as the controlling tendency of Joyce's genius—to move through the fullest realization of the human, the all-too-human, to that which transcends and denies the human. It was a progress he was committed to make, yet he made it with some degree of reluctance. Had the obscene fantasies been assigned to Stephen Dedalus, they would have implied the import that Professor Ellmann supposes they had for Joyce himself. But Joyce, we may believe, did not want, not yet, so Hyperborean a hero as he then would have had. The ethos and mythos of the 19th century could still command from him some degree of assent. The merely human still engaged him, he was not wholly ready to go beyond it. The fair courts of life still beckoned invitation and seemed to await his entrance. He was to conclude that their walls and gates enclosed nothing. His genius is defined by his having concluded this rather than taking it for granted, as many of the generation that came after him have found it possible to do.

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Devaluation

George Lichtheim

LONDON: "What would be the use if people were to say: 'The British are nice people, but they haven't got any money?'" The question was asked by the late Per Jacobsson, former director of the International Monetary Fund, during one of the recurrent sterling crises of the past decade. I quote his candid remark, though, from a more recent source, namely a Fabian Society pamphlet by Mr. Michael Shanks: a prominent economic publicist and for a while a junior member of the Wilson administration. Mr. Shanks, who at the age of forty already has a staggering list of publications to his credit, served in the Department of Economic Affairs for over two years from the beginning of 1965, and in May 1966 became Coordinator of Industrial Policy, whatever that may signify. He did not last long (neither did the coordination of policy), and currently he functions primarily as the chief oracle of the (London) *Times* in matters economic. It is in part owing to his inside knowledge of the Whitehall machine that the public has in recent months been able to form some impression of what is really the matter with the British economy.

I start in this fashion because I want to make it clear that Mr. Shanks is both knowledgeable and outspoken. He is very much the energetic young meritocrat: former honorary treasurer of the Fabian Society (his lecture, "Is Britain Viable?", from which I have been quoting, is labelled *Fabian tract* 378), former industrial editor of the *Financial Times*, former economics lecturer at Williams College, Mass., indefatigable traveler, broadcaster and writer; and to cap it all, father of four children, he appears to have the stamina of ten ordinary men. He also has a shrewd sense of timing. Thus he left his official post shortly after it became clear that the Wilson government had no idea what to do about the economy; and in his Fabian Society lecture of early November 1967 (now reprinted as a pamphlet) he came out boldly for devaluation at a moment when Treasury mandarins, City bankers, and most editors (including the Editor of the *Economist*) were busy strangling themselves with their Old School Ties. By a stroke of coincidence (if that is what it was), his recommendations were promptly adopted and a fortnight later his subversive lecture appeared in print. This is what one may call sensible timing. Mr. Shanks is currently established as the man who *knew* it had to be done, and his almost daily articles on economic policy now carry the authority of one who was both enough of an Insider to know the ship was leaking, and enough of an Outsider to say so before the Captain had ordered the crew to man the boats. As for the Fabian Society, it can claim the distinction of having supplied the British Cabinet both with its most distinguished ornaments and with its most ruthless journalistic critic.

Lest someone should mistakenly suppose that all this is being said in a carping spirit, let me add that nothing of the sort is intended. Mr. Shanks is one of the ablest commentators in the field, and his inexhaustible energy is fed by a very shrewd brain. He belongs to the little group of realists—Mr. Peter Jay of the *Times* is another, as well as being the son-in-law of Britain's luckless ex-Chancellor, James Callaghan—who had few illusions about the Wilson administration, or for that matter about the exchange rate. One could mention others of that school, e.g., some well-known academics and others of less exalted status, e.g., Mr. Alan Day of the *Observer*: one of the few competent writers employed by that amiable but amateurish journal. And of course, towering above them all, there are the two Cabinet Ministers to whom everyone now looks as the government's last hope: the new Chancellor, Roy Jenkins, and his intimate ally, Anthony Crosland, currently in charge of the Board of Trade. Those two—along with the Defense Minister, Denis Healey—enjoy the unusual distinction of being respected and feared by the Conservatives for their proven administrative capacity and their equally proven trenchancy in debate. If anyone can pull the government and the country out of the mess they are in, then surely it is these three. That at any rate appears to be the informed consensus, both here and abroad. If there are doubts, they relate to Mr. Wilson's strength of character and his willingness to back these realists. Intellectually, the matter is settled. The proper diagnosis, one is told, has at last been made, and it is now up to the patient to swallow the remedies his doctors have prescribed for him.

At this point the writer is tempted to indulge in a minor indiscretion. Plenty of major ones have recently been committed (including the disclosure of Cabinet secrets in, of all places, the

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Times) so perhaps I may be forgiven for repeating what was said to me some years ago about Mr. Crosland by one of his friends and admirers (now himself a junior Minister). The conversation started from a remark to the effect that the distinguished author of *The Future of Socialism* clearly was not a socialist in the accepted or traditional understanding of the term, since he appeared to have little use for public ownership and not a great deal of faith in central planning. To the question why Mr. Crosland did not join the Liberals, since he was so plainly one of them, the reply was: "Tony is a professional and doesn't want to spend the rest of his life in opposition. Besides, the Liberals are a lot of genteel tea-drinkers, and Tony is really quite tough." I report this observation as being one of the few hopeful aspects of what in many respects must be judged a rather somber situation. Toughness is certainly going to be required in making the sort of decisions that have now become necessary, and even more so in making them stick. For all one knows, even Messrs. Jenkins, Crosland, and Healey may not be tough enough. They are certainly competent, far more so than most Tories (there are exceptions to that too), and if the Labour Party can stand the sight of these ruthless managerial types running what is supposed to be a socially conscious and softhearted administration, it is, I suppose, just barely conceivable that between now and 1970 there will *not* be another sterling crisis. I should put it no higher than that.

For the British economy is in a mess. How deep the mess is, only those professionals know who are in daily touch with the works managers and export specialists on whom the brunt of the coming battle is going to fall. Unless these men and their underlings can make something of the opportunity devaluation has offered them, the extra burden now being placed upon the consumer will be wasted. For of course devaluation will make everyone in Britain poorer: that is the aim of the exercise. Will it also make industry more export-conscious? That remains to be seen. If it doesn't, not only will the Labour government be swept away in 1970, but a lot of other things will go by the board as well. Paris is already full of rumors of a second sterling devaluation before long. The French of course are mischief-makers—every sound British patriot is agreed on this subject. Unfortunately the mischievous French have in the recent past displayed an awkward habit of being right about the prospects of the British economy. They are currently being blamed in Whitehall for having given sterling the push last autumn, when they got the European Economic Commission in Brussels to release a pessimistic report on Britain's trade prospects. But the Commission only spelled out what every economist in Brussels had been saying privately for months. Nor were the French alone in predicting an unfavorable British trade and payments balance for as far ahead as one could see: they were joined by neutral observers and by the rest of the Six. So it won't do to put the blame on the General, or on his countrymen. Many of them, including some quite prominent Gaullists, would dearly like Britain to join the EEC, but they wonder whether so drastic a cure may not have a fatal effect on the patient: the patient being the British economy. This writer happened to be present when one of de Gaulle's former Cabinet Ministers (who had resigned his post on grounds of principle) told a distinguished British audience that for his own part he, X., would be happy to see Britain in the Common Market, but that as one who had studied the matter while in office and in possession of all the data, he frankly doubted whether the British economy could stand the strain. The audience looked glum. It was not an agreeable experience for someone who, despite all the incidental drawbacks, has come to cherish his adopted country.

What then is it that fills so many different people with foreboding, and causes even the optimists —that is to say, the civil servants and economic experts who believe the reconstructed Wilson Cabinet can ride out the storm—to warn everyone in sight about the toughness of the measures which will have to be taken? Here perhaps we may go back for a moment to Mr. Michael Shanks and his analysis. He is, after all, a socialist of the Gaitskellite sort (the sort represented by the trio Jenkins-Crosland-Healey), as well as being a professional economist. Unlike the Conservatives, who cannot really want the government to succeed, he hopes and believes it can. Unlike the Liberals—e.g., the City editors, with the *Economist* in the lead—he does not merely want the Wilson government to succeed in its fight to make the country solvent: he wants it to stay socialist, or at least committed to the welfare state. What then does a man like this have to say?

THE ANSWER can be stated simply (we shall leave the technicalities until later). Writing just before the blow (and the pound) fell, Mr. Shanks had reluctantly come to the conclusion that devaluation was the only way out. He was blunt about what this meant for the ordinary citizen. "Devaluation will temporarily—I repeat temporarily—worsen the living conditions of our people. Only if it does this will it enable us to make the decisive shift of our resources from home sales to exports which is the necessary condition for an export-led boom—the only kind of boom which can be sustained without a return to stop-go." Mr. Harold Wilson, addressing the nation on that memorable November 18, was somewhat less candid, but then his policy had just collapsed and he was understandably anxious not to underscore the disagreeable consequences. Devaluation, *he* said, meant that Britain had "got out of the straitjacket" of an unrealistic and artificially frozen exchange rate. True enough, but he forgot to men-

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tion (a) that he and his colleagues had been busy defending this artificial rate for three whole years, sacrificing all else to this aim, (b) that the "straitjacket" of indebtedness to foreign bankers had, if anything, been strapped even tighter, and that the said bankers had extracted a "letter of intent" laying down the British Government's financial priorities for the year 1968. These priorities—to judge from the new Chancellor's first major parliamentary statement—did not leave a great deal of room for the Labour Party's pursuit of its traditional welfare-state goals. In fact, they left no room whatever.*

But why had things come to such a pass? Why, after three years of strenuous efforts, had the authorities found it impossible to stimulate that "export-led boom" which was constantly being dangled in front of the voters? Let us hear the explanation offered by the former Coordinator of Industrial Policy in the Department of Economic Affairs. After all, he if anyone ought to know:

> By and large, exports are very unprofitable compared to home sales, even in today's not exactly buoyant home market conditions. The result is that, despite every inducement, a large proportion of firms are not exporting at all, and in too many others exporting is regarded as a chore. . . . Result—British exports get a bad name (Shanks, p. 8).

You therefore offer the exporters a bonus in the shape of a new exchange rate, which automatically cheapens their goods (or raises their profits if they maintain the old selling price), and hope for the best. The snag of course is that, if the price is lowered, you have to sell *more* goods to get the same quantity of foreign exchange, let alone an increase. In point of fact, the most authoritative forecast currently available—that of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, than which nothing in Britain carries more weight when it comes to forecasting anything—estimates that the results of devaluation will not begin to show before 1969! For the year 1968, the Institute (unlike the Government) actually forecasts another deficit, although a small one. The reason is not far to seek: "shifting our resources" from home to abroad is easier said than done—especially when it has to be done by a Labour Government fearful of causing unemployment by deflating the home market. All of which suggests that 1968 is going to be a very grim year indeed, with the fruits (if any) beginning to ripen thereafter.

II

So much for last November's devaluation of sterling and the immediate prospects ahead. But how did the country get into this situation and why did the Wilson team waste three whole years trying to prop up an unrealistic exchange rate before reconciling itself to the inevitable?

There are short-range and long-range matters to be considered. Let us begin with the best known of the short-term factors: the role of sterling. This will involve citing a few rather boring facts and figures, but once they are out of the way, we can get back to the more congenial task of considering the problem as a whole (including the impact on Anglo-American strategy in what is tactfully known as "East of Suez"). Besides, even sterling is not altogether a bore: especially if you happen to be the government of Australia, and have just seen your foreign-exchange reserves reduced in value by one-seventh overnight. This sort of experience concentrates the mind wonderfully; the more so when it leads to rumors about a similar fate befalling the dollar before very long. (The fact that this particular notion is not very plausible may be lost upon Arab oil sheikhs or Indian peasants, who suddenly decide that gold is perhaps safer after all, even if it carries no interest.)

What then of sterling? The facts are not in dispute and are easy to come by.† Ever since 1945—that is, since the end of a world war from which the United Kingdom emerged as one of the nominal victors—Britain's net sterling liabilities to other countries have been around £3,500 million (some ten billion dollars at the "old" exchange rate, which in fact was not very old, since it dates only from 1949). About two-thirds of this amount represented reserves held by central banks or other official institutions of the so-called "sterling area." This is a technical term that designates those countries which, by tacit or written agreement, had undertaken to keep their foreign-exchange reserves in sterling, instead of converting them into some other currency. Since Britain's own reserves of gold and dollars were never since 1945 much above £1,000 million, it was clear to all concerned that a run on the bank would oblige it to close. That such a run did not occur was due in the main to sound political reasons, plus the knowledge that in the last resort the U.S. Treasury and/or the International Monetary Fund would probably come to Britain's assistance. Moreover, the overseas sterling countries, by keep-

* See Mr. Jenkins's reply to the debate in the House of Commons on December 5, and the relevant editorial and other comments in the *Times* on the following day. Mr. Jenkins on this occasion was handicapped by the caliber of his chief left-wing critic, Mr. Michael Foot, who (to put it mildly) is no economist. But if he had been assailed by the economic expert of the Left, Mr. James Dickens M.P., he would still have had to give more or less the same sort of explanation. Cf. Mr. Dickens's article in the *Times* financial section of December 6, 1967, which set out a socialist alternative to the Government's proposals: namely the confiscation of Britain's privately held "dollar portfolio" of foreign securities belonging to British citizens. This (as the editorialist of the *Times* business section promptly reminded Mr. Dickens) ignored the fact that Britain "depends on international trade and banking for its livelihood."

† See *The World Today* (published by the Royal Institute of International Affairs), London, December 1967.

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ing their reserves in London, were earning a good interest rate—a circumstance now frequently stressed by editorialists who are uncomfortable with the notion that these clients have been hardly done by. It is, however, noteworthy that the countries in question had over the past decade been quietly switching out of sterling into gold or dollars as fast as circumstances permitted: that is to say, as fast as it could decently be done without precipitating an obvious run on the bank. Apparently then they had a premonition of what might happen, and tried to guard against it as best they could, though still leaving the bulk of their balances in London. By a paradox which will seem strange only to those who don't realize how much depends upon informal understandings, Britain's very real vulnerability acted as a safeguard against the threat of sudden large-scale withdrawals. The overseas countries knew quite well that if they tried to convert their sterling balances into gold or dollars, the Bank of England would have to shut up shop, or alternatively call for aid from the other members of the so-called Group of Ten: the U.S., Canada, the Six of the EEC, and Switzerland. These countries, the only ones to possess large reserves, were able and (up to a point) willing to help, but not enthusiastic about the thought of having to shoulder Britain's sterling liabilities. To say the least, a run on the bank would have embarrassed them. Hence for many years no really serious run developed—until last November, when a number of unfavorable factors suddenly coincided, thereby causing a flight from the pound of much larger proportions than on previous occasions. The flight was not due to the overseas central banks, which on the contrary were left holding the devalued sterling baby; but it was not (as Mr. Wilson tried to make out in his rather disingenuous broadcast of November 18) due to "foreign speculators" either. Rather it arose from the fact that ordinary commercial traders who held large quantities of sterling (a currency which still finances about one-quarter of total world trade) had suddenly become nervous and were trying to get rid of it. This is what having a "reserve currency" means: a "reserve currency" is a currency which people will accept in lieu of gold. There used to be two such currencies, the dollar and the pound. Now, for all practical purposes, there is only one, the dollar. And if the wicked French have their way, there will shortly be none at all. But of course this is not to be dreamed of. It is unthinkable (like devaluation).

From this point on the discussion could branch off into a consideration of world monetary problems, the American balance-of-payments deficit (General de Gaulle's favorite hobby-horse, but the U.S. Treasury seems worried too), and the chance that the U.S. authorities may have to choose between (a) abandoning the commitment to convert dollars into gold, (b) raising the purchase price of the metal, (c) "going off gold" altogether, or (d) intensifying the measures announced by Mr. Johnson on January 1st. These are technical problems, and those experts whom the writer has been able to consult seem undecided as among these various possibilities, though on the whole inclined to think that if the dollar lost its automatic gold backing, the European central bankers (with the possible exception of the French) would still go on hoarding it. What would happen if the U.S. Treasury refused to buy gold at *any* price is another matter. The metal would then be of use only to dentists (and would sell at about one-sixth its present inflated value). But this solution, although neat and logical on paper, would surely require the adoption of an alternative international medium, and one does not quite see the entire world assenting to this. There might of course be *two* monetary blocs: on one side the United States plus all those countries willing to accept dollars as a means of payment; on the other, the East European bloc, plus South Africa (the biggest gold producer), France, and the "gnomes of Zurich." The resulting ideological confusion would be amusing to watch, and should furnish a splendid topic for the editorialists of Mao Tse-tung's *People's Daily*. But it is probably too much to hope that we shall actually see it happening.

INSTEAD OF indulging in these pleasant fantasies, let us return to the narrower but more urgent topic of sterling. Britain's present difficulties affect the world because so large a proportion of its trade is still carried on in this currency. Before 1939, sterling was *the* medium in which international transactions took place. After 1945 it was still *a* medium, though gradually being overtaken by the dollar. Now there are influential people who argue that the time has come to free the pound from these responsibilities, thereby bringing it into line with the German mark, the French franc, and other perfectly respectable national currencies which do not aspire to a world role. This is a different matter from the problem of Britain's overseas sterling indebtedness, but the two topics are connected, because the size of the debt, and the smallness of the reserves, have the effect of making sterling unsafe as a trading currency. Confidence in it has repeatedly been shaken, and is now possibly beyond repair. There are still those who see the situation in terms of reconciling Britain's resources with its responsibilities by making a sterner effort to sell British goods abroad. The argument is simple: if the non-sterling countries (those whose central banks do not hold their reserves in London) are going to liquidate their sterling balances every time Britain runs into an external deficit (this is substantially what produced the panic last November), then either the pound must lose its traditional function—or the trade balance must be put right

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so that these constant payments crises come to an end.

Conceivably, however, this is a false alternative. It is arguable—it is indeed beginning to be argued by some quite respectable people—that the economy will *never* recover while it is weighed down with the burden of having to support an international currency. On this assumption, the real though drastic solution is to stop worrying about sterling's international role altogether. The country could then afford to have a floating exchange rate, in accordance with its domestic price level and the ups and downs of its balance of trade. It could even afford to adopt such measures as the nationalization (to employ a polite term) of privately held dollar securities and their addition to the official reserves. This would not please the City, it would cause a great outcry about expropriation, and the present holders (who would presumably be recompensed in non-convertible sterling) would have an additional reason for detesting the Labour government. The advantage would be that Britain could then repay the loans contracted from the International Monetary Fund and buy back the more speculative sterling balances now held in London, thus eliminating the constant fluctuations produced by the inflow and outflow of "hot money." This is what the Left would like to see done. It is not something the present government is likely to undertake. To be fair to Messrs. Wilson and Jenkins, it is arguable that before adopting such Draconian measures one should make sure that the alternative remedies have failed. It is after all just conceivable that Britain's payments balance might begin to show a surplus if the government were willing to cut down on extravagances such as billion-dollar purchases of U.S. military aircraft. This of course means the end of imperial posturing "East of Suez," but then Singapore is to be evacuated by the 1970's anyhow, so why not make it clear now that Britain has decided to adopt a European role? For one thing, it would then be easier to get into the EEC (not that this is going to be an unmixed blessing economically).*

Cutting down on defense expenditure has support among the more realistic Tories, including the supreme realist of all, Mr. Enoch Powell, who is also the Conservative Party's chief defense expert. Mr. Powell wants to get out of Singapore and into Europe. This would make possible major savings on the bill for U.S. aircraft—an attractive notion. It must, however, be recognized that in one sense the "European" argument is academic. There is no early prospect of joining the Six, and no chance of the Wilson government abandoning that fundamental reliance upon the United States which has been the only consistent line in foreign policy it has followed so far. The official argument at the moment can be summed up in the formula: devaluation has given us a chance to break out of the strait-jacket, and for the next two years all efforts must be concentrated on producing an export-led boom, while holding domestic costs down as far as possible. Since food prices will go up (by 10 per cent according to the best estimates) and other import prices will rise by up to 15 per cent, this means a cut in real wages. On the other hand, unemployment should fall to almost nothing if exports pick up, as they ought to do. Britain would then at long last have achieved the sort of "economic miracle" that Germany, France, Italy, and Japan have enjoyed, off and on, since the 1950's. The snag is that (to quote the National Institute forecast already cited) "the economy will run up fast to capacity level and reach it well before the full redeployment into exports and investment has been achieved" (see the *Times* of December 6). This is polite language for saying that while the export drive gets under way, we shall be having another round of wage-and-price increases. If this were to happen the advantages of devaluation would have been lost, leading to another currency crisis before long. . . . And if *that* happens, even quite sober people here in London are beginning to wonder just how long parliamentary government can go on functioning. These fears may be unfounded. It is, however, significant that for the first time since the 1930's, they are being voiced in public.

III

We seem thus to have come full circle: from politics to economics and back again; and indeed, when all the technical arguments are exhausted, one is left with some unanswered questions about the capacity of the political system to cope with the structural problems of British society. The problem can be narrowed down further: is the Labour Party—is any Social-

* A little noticed side-effect of last November's devaluation was the Australian government's decision *not* to follow suit, thereby bringing nearer the break-up of the sterling area. The decision could be explained in terms of the increasing "hardness" of the Australian currency since the discovery of big oil and gas deposits which promise to give Australia a healthy surplus on its payments balance. But the British government's reluctant decision to accelerate the withdrawal from the Far East probably also had something to do with it. Australia is moving into the American orbit, thereby easing Britain's path into the Common Market. The joke (if one can call it that) is that General de Gaulle should have chosen this particular moment to be even more negative about the British membership application. But then the General has his own timetable, which is not that of the run-of-the-mill politician. "When I am gone, the British will land in Europe," he is reputed to have said. He is also reliably reported to have observed of his own country: "When I am gone, France will return to her vomit." Like Bismarck (whom he resembles in other ways too) de Gaulle combines a mystical patriotism with a profound contempt for his countrymen, taken singly or as a collection of individuals who do not measure up to his idea of France. This makes it very difficult for commonsensible Britons like Mr. Harold Wilson to understand him, but just now this is not an urgent problem.

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Democratic party—capable of handling this sort of situation? The immediate answer appears to be: why not? After all, Sweden did it in the 1930's, and the Swedish Social-Democrats have been in office ever since, thereby setting an example to their imitators, among whom Mr. Harold Wilson is certainly not the least conspicuous. But Sweden did not have Britain's peculiar legacy of empire, with all the grand and expensive habits that go with it (such as paying for military, air, and naval bases in the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean). Neither was it plagued with the burden of an international reserve currency, and a banking community which has invested its hope and pride in its traditional world role. In Sweden it was only the unions and the industrialists who mattered. In Britain generals, admirals, and City financiers matter a lot more than they should. Moreover, it is arguable that neither the manufacturers nor the unions have yet had quite enough sense knocked into them by these recurrent crises.

WHAT THEN of the Labour Party as a political organism? Can it stand the strain? Ought it perhaps to cut its connection with the unions (which have 130 representatives among the 350 or so Labour members of Parliament)? Should it drop its residual claim to being a socialist party? But what does its particular kind of socialism signify in practice anyhow? Certainly not a commitment to a radically different kind of society—one based on common ownership. No one ever suspected the Labour Party of being willing to undertake this sort of Long March into the future. When one hears it said that Labour should announce its commitment to a mixed economy, one wonders what such critics can be arguing about. After all, the whole Wilsonian experiment has assumed the continuance of a flourishing private sector.

There are people who will tell one that what has happened is that the Labour Party (like the Conservatives in the 1950's) has been quietly taken over by the liberals; that it should now describe itself as a "radical, non-socialist" party; and that the socialist minority ought to secede and set up shop on its own. This kind of talk is backed up by the argument about the former Gaitskellites having got control of the key positions in the administration. There are two things to be said about this. In the first place, neither Harold Wilson nor George Brown fits the formula: they are Social-Democrats of a fairly traditional type, and the Party could not conceivably survive and win an election without them. Secondly, the Gaitskellites themselves are not "liberals," if by a liberal is meant someone who believes that the market economy can cope with the problems of contemporary society. There are such people (although their number is shrinking) but Messrs. Jenkins, Crosland, Healey, and the rest are not among them. The Gaitskellite faction stood and stands for State management of the economy, meaning some sort of centralized direction of affairs. Its quarrel with the Bevanites was over public ownership, not over planning. Hence the argument that the real socialists should leave the Labour Party is senseless. The Left is neither more nor less "socialist" than the Gaitskellite faction. It merely happens to dislike America and to have some sentimental notions about the beauties of Afro-Asian nationalism: amiable fantasies which seem proof even against the evidence of the current bloody turmoil in Nigeria. For the rest, the Left favors "bringing the troops home." What does all this have to do with socialism? The only people entitled to call themselves socialists are those who believe in the superior effectiveness of a planned economy over an unplanned one, and on this issue the Left is far from united. It is true that some of its leading figures are in favor of a siege economy, but when it comes to a choice between national planning and the sectional interests of the unions, the Left is not well placed to advertise its socialism. Its more vocal members are mainly concerned to press the claims of "the workers" at the expense of all other considerations. It can of course be argued that pressing the claims of the workers (or for that matter, of the unemployed) is the only proper occupation for people on the political Left. This amounts to saying that Labour ought to let the Conservatives misgovern the country. At heart this is what the Left would really like. Back in opposition it could proclaim its generous sentiments, and go on dreaming of the day when all these wretched economic problems will have ceased to matter. This assumes, however, not merely that Labour will lose the next election (an increasing probability), but that the Conservatives will thereafter prove capable of governing more efficiently. Anyone who has seen and heard Messrs. Heath and Macleod on television must have serious doubts on this subject. These two gentlemen do not strike one as being notably tougher or more capable than Mr. Wilson and his crew. Neither does the amiable Mr. Maudling, whose consumer boom in 1963-64 very nearly (but not quite) got the Conservatives returned to office, at the cost of squandering the country's foreign-exchange reserves and laying the ground for the subsequent sterling crises. The Conservative Party largely reflects the tribal superstitions of the business community, just as Labour reflects the archaic mentality of the unions. Since what is wrong with Britain is that neither management nor the unions are very good at their respective jobs, this state of affairs does not augur well for the future.

None of which rules out the possibility of a drastic political reshuffle if things continue to go wrong. A new element has recently entered the situation in the shape of Scottish (and to some extent Welsh) nationalism. The next election may witness a nationalist landslide in Scotland and a concurrent drive to set up a regional legislature

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in Edinburgh though hardly (whatever the more enthusiastic Celtic separatists may think) the repeal of the Union and the formal separation of Scotland from England. Nationalist gains will be largely at the expense of the Liberals, whose remnants might thereupon be divided up between the two major parties. We shall then hear even more of the argument that Labour has ceased to be a socialist party. The answer is that it never was one. Labour was and is, and will doubtless remain, a Social-Democratic party, that is to say, a party committed to the mixed economy and the welfare state. Since this is quite acceptable to left-wing liberals, it is unnecessary to change the party's name. But people are to some extent the prisoners of their own myths. If the left-wingers should imagine that something fundamental has changed, they may in fact secede and set up a genuinely socialist party, midway between Labour and the dwindling Stalinist sect. Something like this has already happened in two of the Scandinavian countries and there is no reason why it should not happen in Britain. The issue will be described as "socialism," but will in fact be neutralism, since what holds the Left together is really the desire to get out of NATO, do away with U.S. bases in Britain, and terminate the spectacle of Labour Ministers (plus the inevitable Anglican clergyman) pouring champagne over the hull of yet another rocket-carrying Polaris submarine. A pacifist party of this kind, as a permanent opposition group, is a distinct possibility. It should, among other things, provide a political umbrella for the intellectuals of the New Left, not to mention the swelling legions of colored immigrants and their offspring (likely to number several million by the end of the century). What else such a party can do, at any rate in the 1970's, I am not sure, but it will doubtless liven things up. Meanwhile Conservatives and Social-Democrats will take turns governing the country, just as they have been doing in Scandinavia for decades. This is irrespective of whether and when Britain eventually joins a federated or confederated Western Europe. The country's basic structure does not depend upon such external arrangements, although an accelerated withdrawal from costly and untenable overseas positions will doubtless produce a few changes in outlook: more interest in continental Europe and a lessening of the present obsessive concern with the Persian Gulf or Southern Yemen. Oil of course is thicker than water (and almost worth its weight in gold). It is not, however, quite as thick as blood (I apologize to any biologist who may chance upon these lines).

Lest all this sound unduly cynical, let me quote an irreproachable witness who combines academic distinction with left-wing socialist sentiments: Mrs. Joan Robinson. For the benefit of the uninitiated I remark that, although as an economist not technically a Marxist, she is about as far left as one can go without being a Communist (she is in fact closer in sympathy to Mao's China than are the majority of her fellow-socialists in this country). Well, here is what Mrs. Robinson had to say in a comparatively recent tract on Britain's persistent structural problem:*

> It seems to me that the people of this country are not in the mood for radical change. They prefer a loose-jointed, ramshackle economic system to one streamlined for efficiency and speed. They are willing to accept much that is irrational and unjust for the sake of preserving the continuity of our political institutions and the glorious flummery of Church and State.
>
> But at least the rising generation resents privilege and snobbishness, and demands genuine equality of opportunity for everyone to use what talents he may have. They are perfectly ready to shed the last rags of empire and settle down to being a small country devoted to neutrality and peace. The transition to such a line of policy could not be quick and easy, but if the aim was clear, the way would be found.

For Mrs. Robinson, who on this issue represents the Labour Left (and a fair slice of the academic community), the desirable outcome of the present crisis presents itself in terms of "Swedish" neutrality. This is one possibility among others (there is also the "Atlantic" solution, not to mention the gospel of European federalism). The choice thus lies among Atlanticism, Europeanism, or "Little Englandism," with the Left plainly favoring the last-mentioned. These are foreign-policy options which can be—and are being—debated on the customary political and economic grounds (will the U.S. swallow us up if we go into an Atlantic free-trade area? Can the French keep us out of Western Europe in the 1970's?). But mark the note of resignation with which the most eminent living representative of the Fabian tradition judges her countrymen: they are not, in her opinion, ready for anything more drastic than "genuine equality of opportunity." Mrs. Robinson, in other words, holds that the most the British will stand in the way of radical reorganization is Swedish-type Social Democracy. She ought to know. Most of her fellow economists seem to think that even this is a bit too much, and that the 1970's may well see a temporary revival of free-market economics, Conservative rule, and Atlanticism in politics. At any rate these are the real issues. They do not have a great deal to do with what the New Left would describe as true socialism.

* *Economics: An Awkward Corner*, Pantheon, 86 pp., $3.95.

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Translating the Psalms

Milton Himmelfarb

O sing to the Lord a new song. . . .
—Psalm 96: 1 (98: 1, 149: 1)

SOME OF THE fundamental texts of Chinese antiquity are so ambiguous, a scholar once told me, that not only what they mean is in dispute, but even what they are about. When I heard that, I felt sorry for the Chinese and the Sinologists. It's all very well to say that if ambiguity makes you uneasy you're an authoritarian personality, but surely such texts are too much of a good thing.

Of course, neither is ambiguity completely absent from the more Occidental languages and literatures. When I was young, one of my Latin teachers used to amuse himself by giving his students a sentence of five short words to translate: *Mea mater sus est mala.* (Punctuation was unknown to the ancients.) It can mean: "My mother, O pig, is wicked." It can also mean: "Priestess, my sow is ugly"; or, "Come on, goddess, a boar is eating the apples" or peaches, or pomegranates, or bad things. And so on. But that sentence is exceptional. If a Latin text is hard, that's seldom because it's more than normally ambiguous.

Similarly with Hebrew. Spinoza didn't doubt he knew what the Bible was saying, since he didn't doubt he knew Hebrew. And that wasn't only because our printed Bibles are "vocalized" or "pointed," i.e., have vowel signs. Arthur Koestler said he could never learn to read unpointed Hebrew, and complained about the imprecision and ambiguity of words presenting themselves to a reader in the bare bones of their consonants. But we don't normally read isolated words, we read sentences, or words in a context. Without a sentence or a context, vowels don't always help: taken by itself, what exactly does *sound* mean? On the other hand, if you're in a car heading from New York to New Jersey and you pass a marker with the legend G WSHNGTN BRDG, you have no right to grumble about ambiguity. Spinoza understood not only the vocalized Bible, but also the unvocalized books of the Rabbis and Maimonides.

If he was confident he knew what his Hebrew (and Latin) authors meant, we should be more confident. A century after him, Rousseau was still able to define etymology as a science in which vowels count for nothing and consonants for very little. Then Indo-European and Semitic historical linguistics hardly existed, now they are firmly established. We have just finished this year's reading of Genesis in the synagogue. With the help of the late E. A. Speiser's translation and notes, in the Anchor Bible, we could understand Genesis better than the men of an earlier day. Above all, Speiser was a linguist.

READING THE FIRST fifty psalms with the help of Mitchell Dahood's translation and notes, also in the Anchor Bible,* what do I understand? I'm not sure. The only thing I'm sure of is that Father Dahood's volume is different in kind from Speiser's. Someone who has no Hebrew can be given the Anchor Genesis with the assurance that it will bring him close to the original, and to the world of things and thoughts in which that came into being. You would be doing such a person a disservice if you gave him Dahood's Psalms I. Even if he has Hebrew, the book may irritate him beyond bearing. I am myself an equable sort, but reading Dahood, though it pleased me sometimes, exasperated me often. That is less his fault than the editors'. His work simply doesn't belong in the Anchor Bible, with its implicit promise to the common reader. It is a kind of demonstration project.

Dahood, a Jesuit, teaches Ugaritic literature at the Pontifical Biblical Institute. (Ugaritic is a language first uncovered about forty years ago in Syria. Most scholars think it is a form of Canaanite, and therefore closely related to Hebrew. The Ugaritic texts are several hundred years older than the oldest parts of the Bible.) Together, Dahood's introduction, translation, and notes make up a sort of manifesto. He is saying, in effect: "The day of the Bible scholar not expert in Ugaritic is past, particularly if he specializes in such books as Psalms and Job. Only Ugaritic can help with those books, because even the Septuagint, the most ancient version, no longer understands their Canaanite archaisms—of vocabulary, grammar, style, imagery, and the rest. Of course, the Masoretes don't understand either, since they're later still. Hence we may ignore what the Masoretes added to the text or imposed on it: vowels, punctuation, verse division, sometimes word di-

* Volume 16 of the Anchor Bible, Doubleday, 1966, xliii + 329 pp., $6.00.

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vision. The psalms were always in liturgical use, so that the consonantal text the Masoretes received and transmitted is trustworthy." In Dahood's words: "[In] the first fifty psalms . . . resort to emendation can be justified in fewer than a half a dozen instances."

Most of this is seriously meant, but it can't all be. For instance, when it suits Dahood's purpose he is ready enough to follow the Septuagint's example, and even—because he's a Catholic priest?—the Vulgate's. (Most unscientific, that. The Vulgate is late and has little independent value as a witness.) Between the lines Dahood seems to be saying: "Ugaritic gives me a bag of tricks. With Houdini's tricks, he could have himself shackled and immured, and yet escape. With mine, I can hold myself to the transmitted consonants and yet make of them pretty well what I choose, by adducing Ugaritic precedents. I don't really believe all the things I say here. I say them only to make you see the virtuoso performances that Ugaritic makes possible, and the stodginess you're condemned to without it."

At one point Dahood becomes aware that this is what he sounds like, and he hurries to deny it's what he means. He has told us things like these: that the suffix *-i*, first person in Hebrew, can be understood as third person, if convenient, in the light of "Phoenician and probably Ugaritic"; that similarly a troublesome *l-*, "to," can be taken as an Ugaritic vocative or emphatic particle ("O" or "indeed, surely"); and that a difficult *lō'* (*l'*), 'not," can be read as **lē'* (since it, too, is *l'*), "Victor, Victorious One." He assures us that while "this . . . may sound much like 'you name it, we have it,'" it isn't. Really? I find it hard to believe that so many prepositions have to mean "from" quite so often—not only the one we always knew meant "from," but also those we thought meant "to" and "in" and "on." When there isn't much perceptible difference between in" and "from," why insist that thunder *bashamayim*, "in the sky," should be "from the sky"?

An example of the lengths Dahood will go to in order to avoid facing the need for emendation —or, alternatively, of the joy he has in showing off his bag of tricks: If only because in the bad old days Ps. 2: 11-12 were a favorite proof-text for Christian theologians trying to convince Jews that the Hebrew Bible foretold Jesus the Christ, those two verses are well-known for their difficulty. In the Masoretic Text the end of the first and the beginning of the second are *wegilu bire'adah. nashsheqū-bhar*. King James: ". . . and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son . . ."; Jewish Publication Society: ". . . and rejoice with trembling. Do homage in purity . . ."; Revised Standard Version: ". . . with trembling kiss his feet . . ." (this last annotated as "conjectural. The Hebrew of 11b and 12a is uncertain"). RSV's conjecture follows the recommendation of the critical apparatus in the third edition of Biblia Hebraica. The consonants that have caused all that trouble are *wgylw br'dh nšqw br*. With a minimum of rearrangement and the loss of only one *w*, Biblia Hebraica tells us to add the first word to the fourth, reading *br'dh nšqw brglyw*, i.e., *bire'adah nashsheqū beraglaw*—"with trembling kiss His [sc., the LORD's] feet": neat, economical, and satisfactory.

DAHOOD GOES ALL around Robin Hood's barn: ". . . and live in trembling, O mortal men. . . ." He keeps the consonants, but divides the last two words in his own way—*nš qbr*. (He says this is "no consonantal change," but note that he has dropped the *w* after *q*. If challenged, he would probably say that the *w* was a mistaken semi-vowel introduced into the text by a scribe trying to make the spelling a little fuller. Canaanite texts are characterized by *scriptio defectiva*, skimpy spelling.) Either because he is constrained by the new meanings he has erected, or just for the fun of it, Dahood gives "live" for *gilu* instead of "rejoice." He has to twist and turn for that, and I don't think it comes off; but no matter. The real innovation is "O mortal men": *nš qbr*, vocalized *neshe qebher*, "men of the grave." *Neshe*, "men of"? It means "women of"; "men of" is *anshe*. Quite all right—". . . *nashim*, 'men' [and therefore *neshe*, 'man of'], is well-documented in Ugaritic. . . ." (He gives only one example.) Shouldn't the consonants of *neshe* be *nšy*, not *nš*? Blame the skimpy spelling. The Bible offers us compounds, Dahood says, in which the first element is *ish*, "man of," or *bene*, "sons of," and the second element is *mawet* or *temutah*, "death." "Men of the grave" is of a piece with such constructions.

The fact remains that neither Ugaritic nor Hebrew has a straightforward instance of *neshe qebher*—or *ish/anshe qebher*, or *ben/bene qebher*. If RSV calls "kiss his feet" conjectural, what shall we call Dahood's "O mortal men"? He doesn't give us "O mortal men" in a discursive note, as a possible alternative to a standard translation. It *is* his translation. And then, demolishing his own elaborate structure, he notes: "The recent proposal of Henri Cazelles . . . in *Oriens Antiquus* 3 (1964), 43-45, who translates *'Saluez le Brillant'* [Pay your respects to the Shining One], on the basis of Ugar. *brr*, 'to shine,' is possible though it requires further confirmation." Yet, determined to immortalize his mortal men, Dahood won't change his translation. One doesn't usually expect such farce in work of this kind. It is almost as delightful as his saying, in a note to Ps. 36, that another scholar's emendation "is too clever by half."

It's unsettling that Dahood can't even be relied upon not to be directly helpful. Every now and then one of his suggestions is so elegant that it compels admiring assent. Close by, a like suggestion wobbles and misses, because there it is complicated and ungainly.

Take denominative verbs. Dahood is fond of

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them. Ugaritic, he says, liked to form verbs from nouns, especially parts of the body, and from numerals; and such verbs, until now mostly unrecognized, abound in the text of Psalms. In 22:26 (25) he is fine. King James, JPS, and RSV all translate, more or less, "From Thee comes my praise [i.e., the praise of me] in the great congregation," while Dahood says, "One hundred times will I repeat to you my song of praise [i.e., the song of praise by me] in the great congregation." Let us dispose of secondary matters first: *tehillati* is equally "my praise" and "my song of praise." (The Hebrew for "Psalms" is *tehillim.*) The problem is in the first part of the verse. KJV, JPS, and RSV straightforwardly render *me'ittekha* (*m'tk*), "from thee (is)," as "from Thee comes." For Dahood those consonants clothe a verb based on *me'ah* (*m'h*), "hundred." He reads *m'tk* as *mē'iṯiḵā** = *mē'iṯi*, a *pi'el* verb, + *-ḵā*, here dative: "I have repeated (repeat, shall repeat) to you a hundred times." Why is it spelled *m'tk* and not, as we should expect, *m'ytyk* (or *m'tyk*)? *Scriptio defectiva* again.

Here the denominative verb is a success, in 20:8 (7) a failure. KJV: "Some *trust* in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the LORD our God." JPS: "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will make mention of the name of the LORD our God." RSV: "Some boast of chariots, and some of horses; but we boast of the name of the LORD our God." (I prefer "Some invoke chariots, and others horses; but we the name, etc.") There is only one verb in the Hebrew text—in the second clause, where "we" is its subject. In the first clause it is implied, with "some" and "others" as subjects. The verb is *nazkir*, from the root *zkr*, "remember"—in this form, "cause to be remembered"; and all the translations cited so far understand it in that sense. Not so Dahood, who renders: "Some through chariots, and others through horses, but we through the Name of our God are strong." *Nazkir*, he thinks, is a denominative verb from the *zakhar* (*zkr*) that means "male." Just as elsewhere *nagbir* is from *gebher* or *gibbor* (*gbr*), and means "we shall be powerful," so here *nazkir* means "we shall be (are) male, i.e., masculine, i.e., strong."

Dahood is wrong. *Zakhar* means only "male." It refers to what is common to rams and infant boys, distinguishing them from ewes and infant girls. It is biological only—one might say, anatomical; whereas *gbr* is social. *Gbr* and its derivatives, in the sense of "man, manliness, power," are frequent in Psalms, but *zakhar*, "male," is not to be found there at all. In the whole Bible no form of *hizkir* suggests the meaning "to be male," let alone "to be strong"; and every locution similar to our *beshem . . . nazkir* (see especially Exodus 23: 13, Joshua 23: 7, and Isaiah 48: 1) is related to "cause to be remembered, mention."

What led Dahood astray? The critical apparatus of Biblia Hebraica, noting the Septuagint's "we shall be made great," records that some would therefore emend *nazkir* to *nagbir*. Dahood wants to accomplish the same thing without emending, so he shows off—in a rather unfortunate way, because we have to ask ourselves whether he is so lacking in linguistic finesse as to confuse the different connotations of *gbr* and *zkr*. But it is as a linguist that he addresses us.

Generally, the verb in biblical poetry, always difficult, with Dahood enters the domain of total arbitrariness. Whatever he prefers, he can justify: perfect imperfects, precative perfects, *-ah* as Canaanite-influenced 3rd-person perfect *masculine* singular, *-u* as Canaanite-influenced 2nd-person imperfect masculine *singular*. That is true also of his infixed *-t-*'s, enclitic *-m*'s, intensive *b-*'s, and inserted *ki*'s. Not that such things may not exist, but that he makes entirely too free with them. My most common marginal note is the exclamation point, meaning "Everything can be anything!" On a higher turn of the spiral, the linguist Dahood seems to have put us back in the pre-linguistic conditions Rousseau laughed at.

A final comment on these matters. Of the Forty-first Psalm Dahood says: "The language of this lament is very archaic (probably Davidic era) and difficult, so that the translation of several clauses is doubtful." The Davidic era—that is, about 1000-950 BCE. Most of the psalms, therefore, are in his view later; but not nearly so late as was thought two generations ago, when the critics spoke confidently of Maccabean psalms. From this and other things Dahood says, we may infer that he thinks most of the psalms to be no more than 350 to 400 years younger than this archaic one. That is to say, he perceives a marked difference in language arising in the course of four centuries. But he also says that the Ugaritic texts were composed or first written down about 1800 BCE, or earlier. They are at least eight centuries older than the oldest psalms. How, then, does he allow himself to understand the language of the psalms as if it were contemporary with his Ugaritic? Ugaritic has something to tell us, but what, precisely? Surely something a little less unequivocal than Dahood appears to believe.

An analogy. That German *Knabe* and *Knecht* are cognate with English *knave* and *knight* is certain, but we would be making a mistake if we thought we could explain one set by the other. Again, *magistrate* is from *magis*, "more," and *minister* from *minus*, "less," but it doesn't follow that a police-court magistrate is greater than a minister of state. It is taking much for granted to assume that what a word probably meant in Ugaritic in 1800 BCE it certainly meant in Hebrew in 800 BCE. Because *'pr* is "mud" in Ugaritic—so Dahood tells us—that is how he translates Hebrew *'aphar*. But the biblical evidence is for "dry earth, dust," as we have always supposed. It is good for us to

* His *Mī'ēṯiḵā* must be a typographical error.

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know what the meaning was a thousand years earlier. It is always good for us to know things. Only, then we have the job of determining how to understand our knowledge, and what to do with it. Rarely will we be well-advised to perform tricks with it.

WHAT DAHOOD THINKS of the large questions about the psalms—types, functions, origins, theology—he doesn't tell us here, but promises us in his concluding, second volume. Or rather, here he neither considers them at the length they require nor refrains from considering them at all, but touches on them lightly, which is to say, unsatisfactorily. Some psalms he characterizes as an individual's laments or prayers for deliverance. Then he translates certain words, novelly, as "eternal life" and "resurrection." Why should a lament or a prayer for deliverance include pleas for such boons? What is being prayed for, right now, is surcease here below. And it won't do for Dahood to throw out a remark about Canaanite belief in an afterlife, like the Greeks' Hades and Elysian Fields, and deduce that the Israelites had such a belief, too. The subject needs more than a hit-and-run treatment. Anyway, if that really is an individual's prayer for deliverance, then the sickness or evil that has him in thrall can only be paranoia. All those foes, enemies, and evildoers who compass him about, digging pits and laying snares for him! The "I" of those prayers must be a special kind of individual—an exemplary one, probably a royal one, who in his person and life enacts conflicts of a national or even cosmic bearing.

I have said that Dahood is conservative about the (consonantal) text. But textual conservatism doesn't necessarily imply conservatism about the meaning of the text, or the theology of its authors. The Scandinavian myth-and-ritual school, for instance, is reluctant to emend, but ready to find paganism everywhere. A representative work, by a disciple of the masters of that school, is G. W. Ahlström's *Psalm 89: Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs*, Lund 1959. Conservative about the text, Ahlström is nevertheless sure he is dealing with a ritual of the suffering king, in the cult of a YHWH who is a dying and rising god like Tammuz-Adonis (*adon*, "Lord"). Ahlström is even suspicious of the name David. It means "beloved." Is it really a name? Perhaps it is the appellation of an officiant? Tammuz is called "beloved."

Dahood doesn't go so far—probably. Of the Twenty-ninth Psalm he says that it is a "Yahwistic adaptation of an older Canaanite hymn to the storm-god, Baal," reminding us that more than thirty years ago H. L. Ginsberg called it "a Phoenician hymn in the Psalter." That the Israelites took it over from the Canaanites seems hard to dispute. But if so, why does Dahood translate the first verse as ". . . Give Yahweh, O gods, give Yahweh glory and praise . . ."? RSV: ". . . Ascribe to the LORD, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. . . ." (Note to "heavenly beings": "Heb *sons of gods*.") JPS: "Ascribe unto the LORD, O ye sons of might, ascribe unto the LORD glory and strength." (Note in the Soncino Psalms: "*sons of might*. Hebrew 'sons of the mighty' or 'sons of God,' a double plural of *benel*. The same phrase occurs in 89: 7, where the parallelism shows that the angelic hosts are intended. . . .") This isn't quite the purest or most austere monotheism, but surely the Israelites wouldn't have left the psalm out-and-out polytheistic? In a note Dahood says: "In Canaanite mythology the *bn ilm*, 'the sons of El,' . . . are the minor gods . . . of the pantheon. . . . In the Old Testament the term was demythologized and came to refer to the angels or spiritual beings who are members of Yahweh's court and do his bidding. . . ." Then why not translate, with RSV, "heavenly beings"? Why "gods"?

Above all, why "gods" in the Twenty-ninth Psalm? Father Dahood may not know, but that continues to hold a special place in the Jewish liturgy. It is a Sabbath psalm par excellence, sung Friday night and again Saturday morning, when the Torah scroll is returned to the Ark. (Compare the letter by Rabbi Simeon J. Maslin here,* commenting on Novinsky and Paulo's "The Last Marranos," May 1967, which showed that to this day the Portuguese Marranos recite the same psalm—without knowing what the Hebrew means, of course, and therefore corrupting the text in their oral transmission of it.) In all these many centuries, our pious and learned have been invoking angels—celestial beings—not gods. It must have been always so, from the time when Jews (or Israelites) first began the liturgical use of this psalm.

Another point about liturgy is suggested by the last verse of the Twentieth Psalm, frequent in Jewish prayer: *YHWH hoshi'ah hammelekh ya-'anenu bheyom qor'enu*. JPS follows the punctuation of the Masoretes: "Save, LORD; let the King answer us in the day that we call." RSV, like the ancient versions, divides the verse differently, and probably better: "Give victory to the king, O LORD; answer us when we call." (Again Dahood is ostentatiously fancy.) A Jew who tries to learn from the Bible scholars may agree that RSV is right, but when he leads the congregation in prayer it will not occur to him to shift the pause from *hoshi'ah* to *hammelekh*.

In short, what is the text that is being translated? Is it one or many? Fixed or labile? If you translate what the text was "originally," aren't you ignoring what it is "really"? Haven't we the right to say to Dahood that a hymn with an invocation to gods wasn't yet an Israelite psalm; and that since he's translating Israelite-Jewish psalms

* Letters from Readers, October 1967.

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rather than Canaanite hymns, only "heavenly beings" will do? Going to the very origin, Dahood may mistranslate. Yet the ideal of translation, generally, is to render a text as nearly as possible as it was understood by the writer (or "writer") and his first hearers. Which is only another reason why the enterprise of translation, so necessary and useful, is doomed from the start. E. H. Gombrich says, in *Norm and Form*: ". . . a work of art carries with it the barnacles of its voyage through the centuries . . . anything we say or write about a painting may change it in a subtle way." The text won't sit still for you.

One moral of all this is Utopian, but inescapable. It's a Jew's business to know Hebrew. Reading a psalm, or intoning one, he should have simultaneously present to his mind as many different meanings as possible. He can't depend on a translation, or translations.

What is close to you, or should be close to you, you should know. If you know what's remote and not what's close, you're Levantine—like the upper class in the Egypt of the pashas and effendis, whose beaux-esprits, while knowing little of Arabic or the Arabs, might write delicate little essays about Proust. (So I have seen them described.) Greek is "objectively" a more important language to know than Latin, for literature, philosophy, history of science, or even rabbinics or New Testament; but Latin is the language of the West, and when only one of the two is taught in the West, it will rightly be Latin. If we may trust T. S. Eliot and Edmund Wilson, Dante is greater than Shakespeare; yet an Englishman or American has to know Shakespeare, and only ought to know Dante. A German without Goethe is uncultured, an Englishman or American with Goethe is a curiosity. And so with Jews and Hebrew.

Maybe this is the meaning for us of the old Jewish sigh that it's hard—or, as someone said about something else, it's a complex fate—to be a Jew. You are that lady's son the nuclear geophysicist, and you have to be able to weigh one translation of Psalms against another.

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THE DRAFT CARD GESTURE

Edward Hoagland

A MONTH HAS gone by since I sent my draft card to President Johnson, "symbolically torn in half," as I put it to him. I had written him a more fully reasoned letter ten months before that, and I wanted to transfer myself from one count of dissenters to another one, since the war had gone on. I have no spare draft card to look at to see what penalties I am liable for. In theory they are fearsome enough, but probably I won't be liable for any, being already thirty-five and a veteran besides. Nobody has visited me. If I had really thought the FBI would become actively concerned I might not have made the gesture. The last year or so of my two Army years was nearly as stultified in routine as prison must be and I wouldn't want to repeat the experience. I lead a more codified life now. When I was a boy everything was grist to me.

Like many people, I had been looking for a gesture, some precise, limited gesture which suited me in some way and whose consequences would not be unboundedly grave. One laconic dove I am acquainted with calls this sort of thing therapy, like the professors who shout at recruiters for Dow. Admittedly it is; many of us are losing our cool. The Frenchman who watched the drawn-out, appalling Algerian war at least had a flux of developments going on and a change of personae, not Secretary Rusk for seven years. Nevertheless, although I would do it again for lack of a better idea, I'm not very comfortable with my gesture. It's a glove thrown down that won't be picked up and, in the second place, it seems falsely, deliberately youthful. I might have signed the statement which is available for people who are withholding their taxes instead, but I didn't do that because the nit-picking tangle of red tape that would result seemed more distressing to contemplate than even a possible FBI visit. I have no accountant to help me and I decided the tax protest wasn't my style.

Of course I've marched once or twice, accepting the anomalies of those occasions—the *Worker*'s distributed, the teenagers begging for trouble, the simplistic slogans ("Hell no, we won't go!"). My first march was the great March on Washington in 1963 which crested so much civil-rights accomplishment. I rode down to that in an ancient school bus full of white youngsters who sang "Old Black Joe." And yet they did more than be gauche. They converted the driver, who had started the day like a typical union man driving a busload of kooks, and they sang "We Shall Overcome" so fervently that the maids in the motels stopped working as we went by and when we pulled into the parking lot at the Washington Monument reporters surrounded us. "Free-dom," chanted the Brooklyn College group, which sounded like "We've come," which would have been equally good. The Mississippi contingent marched the length of the mall several times instead of once because they felt they had earned it and because it was a thrill. The police captains beamed as at a fish fry for kids, the city people sneezed with hayfever, the Monument stood gleaming and tall, and happy-looking clergymen stood about everywhere, more happy clergy than ever had gathered before anywhere. The wit of Wilkins, the shivering exhortations of King were enhanced fantastically by the fact that 200,000 people had collected here for the sake of a dream that in some of its practical aspects was on the brink of being achieved. We had a flexible President, we had a national consensus that the time for this change had come due. It was a day of the golden rule, of lavish, exhilarating courtesy. Our cheeks felt pouchy with backed-up tears, our throats throbbed all afternoon. The crowd carried the day—the speakers took the crowd's cue. I was tired and I flew home. In the airport washroom there was rather a wretched moment when I tried to persuade a Negro traveler to break a dollar bill for me, assuming that he was the bootblack because he was black. I had no change because I had tipped the cab driver well, and I'd tipped him well because he had undercharged me. He'd undercharged me because, on impulse, I had sat in the front seat with him; and so the day ended appropriately complex. But the very concept of trekking to Washington in that peaceful, earnest mood, believing that as Americans we could evoke a government response, was part of the year 1963.

IN OCTOBER, that fall, there was a March on City Hall in New York which I joined when it passed my street. This was a ragtag, provocative bunch of young militants and painfully fired-up older Negroes, in some cases drunk. "Wagner must go!" was the yell. We avoided looking at one another as we walked and the police mocked us. None of the featured speakers showed up. The reporters for the *Daily News* grinned. Then, the summer of 1964 was the first summer of riots, the worst in New York since the Second World War. An eerie, gingerly city noticed the lineup of blacks to whites on each subway car. The radio broadcast a Roman roar from 125th Street and even downtown I saw considerable violence and was almost arrested once or twice for sticking my nose in: the Negroes would bob out from under the policemen's clubs and get away. I saw police beaten up too; much sad courage.

Civil rights splintered confusingly as a cause, and that tiny, vestigial ear for suffering that might be remedied which many of us carry around became more attuned to the Vietnam war. The bulky march in April, 1967 to the UN was a pleas-

EDWARD HOAGLAND, *a new contributor, is the author of three novels:* Cat Man *(1956),* The Circle Home *(1960), and* The Peacock's Tail *(1965).*

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ant stroll but the memorable exuberance of the '63 march was gone. We knew we were shouting to a deaf ear, and no one had seen Vietnam, nobody was Vietnamese. At the end of the year, the one draft demonstration at Whitehall which I sampled was still harder for me to unite with. "If the horses are charging you, move in a zigzag pattern. If the horses are standing still, put your hands on their noses and they will not charge you." (At the Washington March in 1963 we'd been told to eat our mayonnaise sandwiches before noon so that they wouldn't taint and make us ill.) It was a pre-dawn army with hectoring marshalls and hurry-up-wait and a certain hysteric camaraderie. Dawn arrived, sunrise came. Police and students acted equally belligerently. The police continually herded us, as if enjoying it, rapping their clubs on the wooden barriers. The setting was an attractive, elderly area faced in old stone, and the shouts echoed up out of unison like the shouts of the Civil War draft riots there. The office-workers began pouring through, perturbed and scolding, because this wasn't a matter of challenging prejudices which they already quite recognized were outdated and contradictory, this was dissent, this was calling an American war an unjust war, a phenomenon new to the national experience for a hundred years. I was dressed respectably but wearing a flower and on the subway I met hundreds of questioning stares.

At home, I wrote my covering note to the President swiftly, attached the two scraps of the draft card with a paper clip, and dropped the letter into the mail chute of my building, listening to its descent to the lobby. I had been carrying it ever since 1950, when Edith Moriarty of Norwalk, Connecticut signed it for me. Indeed, to an extent, I had shared the bewilderment of many of the policemen at Whitehall and the men on the subway because, like them, I was a veteran. I knew the experience of military service was usually a useful one and, looking around, I could see whom it might have been particularly useful to. Although I live differently now from 1955 when I was waiting to be drafted, even taking me as I was then, there would have been some differences between my attitude and that of a lot of the kids on the march. I was a strong patriot, a peppy, idealistic fellow living in a walkup near Union Square. I had hitchhiked all over America, dragging my suitcase to forty-three states. I'd seen the Snake and the Rio Grande and San Diego and Aberdeen, Wash. In fact I'd turned down a trip to Europe in order to go out and see more. And so in the evening I often went to the Square to hear the accents of the soapbox speakers, scanning the Kentucky and wheat-belt faces. It seemed the whole country was represented there, old men of every occupation, scallop-boat men and soybean farmers. The Communists spoke under an equestrian statue—"under the horse's ass," as they said. Early birds saved the platform for them and they scheduled themselves: first a small, dedicated Jewish bookkeeper who spoke seriously from notes; after him, a rangy Dos Passos Communist with Idaho still in his voice and the vocal cords of a Wobbly organizer; and then a Khrushchev Communist; last, an emotive, fair-minded Russian, a family man with an earthy, demonstrative face who rode up from Delancey Street on his bicycle with a white terrier running alongside. They were assigned by the party to the task, they told us, even the early-birds. The other speakers hadn't the training or the podium but they did their best—a prototype black nationalist, a hollering atheist, a thin Catholic proselytizer and retired businessman who lived on West 72nd Street. He tore his voice shouting at all of them. They brought up the Inquisition so many times that at last he started defending it. There were also a couple of opera singers, a vaudeville comedian, and a pacifist who knelt on the pavement after every pugnacious remark that he made. One man couldn't speak at all; apparently his throat had been operated on. He was a turkey-necked, pasty-cheeked fellow of fifty and his opponents would give him the floor anyway. Bending down next to his mouth to catch his whisper, they repeated it to the crowd and then answered it.

I LOVED Steinbeck and Dos Passos and, though my blood beat at the stories of injustice I was told, it was mainly the faces I came to see, the map of the continent, from the tunafish cannery where I'd worked one July to the Platte River that I'd hitchhiked along. I didn't have to be drafted, as a matter of fact. I was choosing to be drafted for a number of reasons, one of which was this heated enthusiasm of mine for America as a whole. I was subject to asthma during the summer from an allergy to grass and I stuttered severely in any case, both of these being legitimate outs. If I misplaced my allergist's letter and didn't happen to stutter during the exam, I had been trained to imitate my own stutter by a speech specialist as part of a regime of training I had undergone, so I couldn't lose. For more than a year, I debated whether to be 4F or 1A. Whenever I leaned toward the first, however, my asthma reared up and practically asphyxiated me and I stuttered so badly I became mute. I did want to go into the Army for the loving and elated reasons that Steinbeck might have but, quite beyond them, I realized I *had* to go in. Whether from a sense of guilt or from doubt of my competence as a man, if I didn't I would be troubled for years afterwards.

The day of the physical came at last. The doctor already had records that would let me out but, talking as smoothly as Simon Peter, I told him please to ignore them, that I was all right. I gained twenty pounds in Basic Training and stopped stuttering completely for a while. The jammed early months of harassment were a sort of bazaar for me of cornpone youngsters, sturdy black sergeants, and capsuled war games. At Fort Sam Houston I slept underneath an undertaker. I had porky best friends and skinny best friends, perfume chemists and lathe operators. Then I was sent to Pennsylvania, where I stayed twenty months, engrossed in writing a novel whenever I could. The supercharged excitement I had felt at first petered out. I became my accustomed neurotic self.

As long as I actually remained in the Army I wasn't too smug or moralistic about having gone in because I wasn't entirely glad. But when the period was finally over I was raucous and difficult for those

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of my friends who had chosen to huddle in graduate school or had painted their toenails red for the draft exam. I thought they'd denied themselves one of the core experiences. I still think they did and I'm sorry that so many boys nowadays find it necessary to avoid that first salubrious shock of a training camp —the self-discoveries and fortuitous friendships and the vaccinal dip in the stewpan of war. It seems necessary that they do so, however. This war is too atrocious in its twists of logic ever to have been declared. It has become as meaningful now to tear one's draft card in half as it once was to insist upon being drafted. If I remain anonymous as a number in a file at the White House or a file elsewhere, at least I have dramatized my dissent by removing myself from a prosaic list to a red-letter list. This, in 1967, is all I intended to do.

* * *

TV (AGAIN)

Neil Compton

MAYBE MCLUHAN IS right and the medium *is* the massage, subtly working us over and restructuring the personality. Do the vaguely flickering illusions of TV, like a kind of electronic LSD, transform forever the psychic orientation of those who take too many trips in front of the living-room set? How otherwise explain the actions of a man like myself who, after solemnly taking leave of the U.S. television scene and giving unanswerable reasons why he should do so,* voluntarily returns a year later?

Rationalizations are easy to make, but only half convincing. I might, for instance, argue that since unavoidable circumstances compel me to watch more television than any normally sane and decent man would choose to, I might as well assuage guilt and self-disgust by turning the ambiguous pleasure into work. But casual viewing, the set turned firmly off during the more arid or putrid stretches of the weekly schedule, is one thing; systematic study, in which *The Newlywed Game* (ABC) and *Bell Telephone Hour* (NBC) are equally grist for the mill, suggests more dubious motives which one hardly dares to probe. In any case, it is now too late for introspection. A new season compels attention.

The immediate prospect is, as usual, depressing. Quite apart from the apocalyptic nature of reality itself in America these days, there are many signs that U.S. television may be approaching a crisis of confidence. (This very term was used by TRB in the November 4 *New Republic* after this essay was virtually complete.) A congenital optimist, I should normally now go on to say that out of the ruins of the old system a new and better one may emerge. However, the image of disarray which the U.S.A. presents to an appalled but fascinated outside observer, coupled with the apparent insolubility of problems such as racism, urban decay, and the Vietnam war (with all it implies about the role of the military in the state), tempts one to reach gloomier conclusions. By this time, men like McGeorge Bundy and institutions like the great foundations have the smell of failure about them. Since they have so dramatically miscalculated the odds on larger issues, there is no reason to believe they hold the secret of better television. They can light little lamps like fellowship schemes, research institutes, and two hours a week of decent programs (on UHF channels that most people can't yet receive) but it will take very much more than that to lighten the darkness visible on NBC, CBS, and ABC.

Even the worst of seasons usually succeeds in mounting one or two productions which merit something more than mere indifference, but 1967-68 will certainly go on record as a year in which not a single memorable new series was introduced. Neither the innovators nor the scissors-and-paste men have succeeded in putting together a convincing show. If we except *The Flying Nun* (ABC) as beneath contempt (it deals with a Honda-riding sister whose wing-like headgear causes her to take off in a moderately high wind), there is only one program which even pretends to any kind of originality. *The Second Hundred Years* (ABC) confronts a sixty-seven-year-old father and his son, thirty-three, with the sudden resurrection of their father and grandfather from the Alaskan avalanche in which he was engulfed and deep-frozen in 1900 at the age of (you guessed it) thirty-three. Sophocles and Shakespeare, not to mention Joyce, would have known how to capitalize upon the uncomfortable potentialities of this theme, but the producers of *The Second Hundred Years* muff their opportunity. Their choice of myth is Rip Van Winkle rather than Oedipus.

Less ambitious practitioners, content to assemble new shows out of the spare parts of old successes, have had equally bad luck this year. The combined talents of Eve Arden, Kaye Ballard, and producer-director Desi Arnaz were not enough to make *The Mothers-in-Law* (NBC) anything more than the leaden echo of a dozen other family situation comedies. *He and She* (CBS) seems to have been designed to fill the gap left by the *Dick Van Dyke Show*. It doesn't.

The biggest disappointment in a year of which no one had great expectations was *N.Y.P.D.* (ABC). According to the advance billing, this series was designed not merely to revive the New York style of documentary realism (*Naked City, The Defenders, Trials of O'Brien*) but also, like *cinéma vérité*, to exploit the mobility and flexibility of the hand-held 16 mm. camera. It turned out to be a slightly more humane East-coast *Dragnet*, fatally limited by poor scripts and a half-hour format that allows no time for development of either plot or character. *N.Y.P.D.*'s rival, *Ironside* (NBC), has time for both, but doesn't know what to do with it all. Raymond Burr was mistaken to cast himself as the wheelchair-ridden Inspector Ironside. Now his entire frame is as wooden and impassive as his face used to be when he played Perry Mason.

The conventional wisdom has it that we are to look to specials for

With this column, NEIL COMPTON *resumes his appraisals of American television for* COMMENTARY. *Mr. Compton is chairman of the English department at Sir George Williams University in Montreal.*

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satisfaction this year. In theory, this advice should make sense. Even before the extraordinary popular success of the televised *Bridge on the River Kwai* and the solid *succès d'estime* of *Death of a Salesman*, last year, the networks were putting more and more time and energy into one-shot spectaculars of this kind. The trend has been assisted by a coincident decline in sponsorship: many programs are now produced by or for the networks, who sell commercial breaks on an individual basis to a variety of advertisers. The net effect is to reduce the ability of advertising agencies to impose brand images upon programs as well as products. If this proves to be more than a passing phase, it will be a good thing for television.

Commercial TV may be said to have reached the end of a process comparable with the heroic but brutal era of American industrial expansion which culminated in the production achievements of the early 20th century. The question now is whether the networks can solve the problems of the next phase without embarking upon drastic and inhuman cultural equivalents of the warfare economy that has kept the factories humming since 1939. During the past sixty-odd years, the entertainment industry has had to cope with an expansion of output so spectacular that it makes the achievements of Detroit assembly lines seem almost minor by comparison. As always happens in such circumstances, the explosion took place without much thought for the conservation of resources or the maintenance of quality control.

At the turn of the century, a great music-hall or vaudeville performer (a Grock, George Robey, Charlie Case, or Joe Jackson) could make a life career out of one basic act varied only by occasional new songs or bits of business. Far from craving novelty from their idols, the audiences were apt to resent departures from familiar routines. Slight variations in pace or content were enough to make each performance alive and exciting.

All this changed, of course, as popular culture became mechanized. First, the phonograph recording created a continuous demand for new material. As everyone knows, even a flawless performance can become tedious if it is repeated again and again in exactly the same way; in any case, those who control the new media have a vested interest in novelty. Then the movies not only destroyed the live vaudeville or music-hall audience, but also developed a world market for the infinitely repeatable animated images of popular performers. New and good material became scarcer than talented artists. Even Chaplin's Tramp who, on the stage, might have lived a long, prosperous, and peaceful life, was forced by the movie medium to undergo a number of metamorphoses (usually up the socio-economic ladder) and ended his career as King of New York.

Meanwhile, the development of commercial network radio created demands for entertainment on a scale never before even dreamed of—about sixteen hours a day, seven days a week on three or four national hook-ups. The almost insatiable market was supplied by entrepreneurs who had about as much regard for the quality of art as the strip-miners of Appalachia have for nature.

The demand was met by standardizing, stereotyping, and prepackaging both performers and their material. The broadcast day was divided into identical and replaceable segments—fifteen, thirty, or sixty minutes in length; soap operas were programmed to make the maximum use of minimum material, with a suspenseful climax every fifteen minutes; the hit-parade rationalized and regulated the rise and fall of popular songs, usually played with machine-like precision by large, well-drilled bands with identical girl singers; popular performers exploited instantly recognizable voices, accents, or stock phrases ("Hi-ho, everybody," "Wanna buy a duck?," "I'll stick to my horse," etc.) to serve as personal images; once broadcast, programs were discarded like paper cups never to be repeated except as summer replacements; networks conspired to prevent the audience from diversifying itself, by scheduling similar programs to conflict with one another; and the week was rigidly organized to inculcate regular and predictable listening habits.

When television began to take over the great audience from radio, much of all this was simply translated from radio into video terms. Some features are still standard practice on TV. However, even the immense resources of the U.S. are not enough to keep three centralized networks supplied with eighteen hours of new visual material every day. Furthermore, the rigors of TV performance are so great and the dangers of overexposure so real that super-stars, who draw the largest audiences, often refuse to commit themselves to a regular series. (The exceptions are such relaxed and artistically unambitious personalities as Perry Como was and Dean Martin is.) As an almost accidental consequence, the networks are being forced to present an increasingly varied selection of not-so-old movies, rebroadcasts of past TV successes, and special features produced with at least a little more imagination and care than is usually devoted to the episodes of a weekly serial. If, with these alternatives available, the public continues to display its boredom with attempts to exploit some formula situation throughout several dozen permutations and combinations, then television may at last be forced to husband its resources more economically, revive some of the worthwhile programs now stored away on tape or film, and concentrate its vigor and creativity more fruitfully on a less insanely inflated volume of productions. However, the realization of this utopian vision is a long way off, if indeed it is not a mirage.

So far this season, there has not been much to justify hope. Apart from a couple of slick but empty movies produced especially for TV —*Stranger on the Run*, a Western with Henry Fonda (NBC, October 31) and *The Outsider*, a detective thriller with Darren McGavin (NBC, November 21)—I have watched only one dramatic special worth even mentioning. *Do Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night* (CBS Playhouse, October 17), a ninety-minute play by Loring Mandel directed by George Schaefer, was a study of the aged in the mod-

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ern family that must have wrung withers all over America. However, this painful exercise in bourgeois realism was raised above the level of popular journalism only by the convincing performance of Melvyn Douglas, who seems to be making a second career typecast as a septuagenarian stoic. An enlightened sponsor bunched the commercial messages at the beginning and end of the play, allowing viewers their longest period of uninterrupted contemplation since President Kennedy's funeral.

I must confess to having skipped a number of promising programs, including *The Wyeth Phenomenon* and *Gauguin in Tahiti* (CBS, October 3 and 21), and several presentations of the *Bell Telephone Hour* (NBC), on the rather specious grounds that this sort of upper-middlebrow cultural fare is somehow less significant than what is offered to a wider audience. However, I shall devote a subsequent review to programs of this kind. In the meantime, a great deal of dutiful attention to specials with less exalted artistic pretensions produced only one hour of relatively unalloyed pleasure—*And All that Brass* (NBC, September 13), a witty and imaginative showcase for the Tijuana Brass, a group whose pseudo-marachi style ought in theory to be ersatz and vulgar but in practice is crisp and unhackneyed.

In the field of news and public affairs, several interesting mutations seem to be taking place, some of them representing cautious breaches of the hitherto unbreakable iron law of weekly scheduling. On four consecutive evenings last June, CBS News presented a series of hour-long programs on *The Warren Report* (June 25-28; produced by Leslie Midgely). This bold plan was presumably adopted to avoid the superficiality and discontinuity that attends an attempt to cope with so complex a subject within the usual limitations. However, it turned out to be a spectacularly missed opportunity. At least one member of the audience who began watching with a reasonably open mind on the subject of the assassination came to the conclusion that CBS News, if not the authors of the Warren Report itself, had some kind of special interest in confirming the official story. The most damning support for this suspicion was not the limited time allowed to dissenters or the evaded discussion of Oswald's possible links with the FBI or CIA, but the eagerness to bring forward dubious new arguments in general support of the Commission's findings—particularly an unconvincing reinterpretation of the Zapruder film and a ludicrously inadequate attempt to demonstrate experimentally that a single bullet could have wounded both Kennedy and Connally in the manner claimed by the Report. (It didn't quite work, but this failure didn't impair CBS's faith that it *might* have worked on November 22, 1963.) No one expected a major television network to reach any other conclusion than that generally approved by the establishment, but it was rather surprising to see a sophisticated news service so clumsy about papering over the cracks in the argument.

A more pleasant and successful departure from regular program routine was ABC's four-hour documentary spectacular on *Africa* (September 10; produced by James Fleming). Taking over a tradition which NBC abandoned after its relatively unsuccessful *White Paper* on foreign policy (1965) and on organized crime (1966), ABC almost made up for its normal indifference to anything but popular entertainment by producing something close to an artistic and educational masterpiece. The program was raised above the level of normal competent documentary by the brilliance of Eliot Elisofon's direction, the superb score by Alex North, and the intelligent narrative, well spoken by Gregory Peck.

The aim was to destroy the impression of mysterious uniformity implicit in such clichés as "The Dark Continent" by literally irradiating the subject with light and color. Those who lasted the course from 7:00 until 11:00 P.M. emerged with an awareness both painful and delightful of Africa's awesome diversity. The program was arranged in four roughly self-contained hour-long segments, making it suitable for rebroadcast as part of the regular schedule: a survey of the land, its animals, and its people from the stone-age Gwi Bushmen of the Kalahari to the bizarre sophistication of Lagos, the "comedian's mask of Nigeria" according to Wolé Soyinka; a study of African politics and the problems of economic, educational, and medical development; some fascinating glimpses of Africans at play and a rather depressing account of attempts to establish multi-racial states; and, finally, a predictably gloomy hour on southern Africa with its various forms of white domination and repression. Everywhere, picture and sound (particularly African music of many varieties) were allowed to carry the maximum burden of meaning: the commentary seldom became obtrusive. Nevertheless, I wish that the program could have been less irritatingly square and American in some of its political judgments. Naturally, Kwame Nkrumah got clobbered, the camera lingering lovingly over evidences of his architectural megalomania and the commentary suggesting that he is responsible for all Ghana's ills. Likewise, Julius Nyerere was ac-

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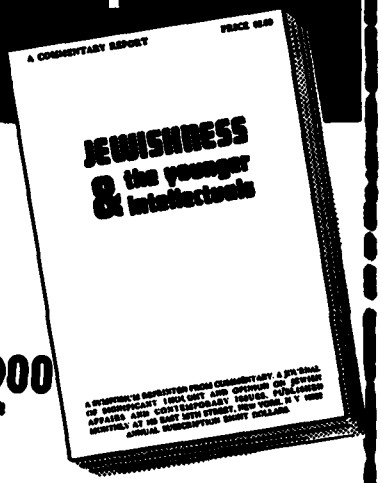

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cused of running a Chinese-style Communist government in Tanzania. People who see the world in such simplistic terms are in danger of becoming as pathetic and irrelevant as poor Sir Harry Oppenheimer, the financier, who was shown making a weak stab at justifying the status quo in South Africa. Fortunately, these were only momentary aberrations in an evening of rare beauty and sanity.

To DESCEND from the sublime to the almost ridiculous, NBC has recently been experimenting with the format of the Huntley-and-Brinkley news show. After local correspondents have made their formal reports, they now sometimes carry on a brief discussion among themselves or with either or both of the anchormen. In theory, this ought to add a much-needed element of dialogue to the usual Olympian monologue of the TV newscaster. In practice, it does not. Dialogue implies some exchange of opinions, and these NBC types play their ideological cards as close to the chest as Eric Sevareid (CBS's one-man dialectical band). Sad to say, they lack his talent for making careful commonplaces sound elegant and profound. The net result is to reduce the quantity of news without a corresponding improvement in depth or quality of coverage.

All the same, this futile gesture may have been a well-intentioned effort to adjust to new realities. The great consensus that prevailed on U.S. television when I first became a professional viewer* has melted away amid the welter of urban riots, Vietnam reportage, and anti-war demonstrations. After they have shown Detroit burning, American soldiers cutting ears off Vietcong dead, and Los Angeles police jabbing billy-clubs into the abdomens of demonstrating students, the networks can hardly go on pretending that reality in America is middle class and monolithic like themselves. On the other hand, one can't expect them to adjust to the new state of affairs with any enthusiasm. Depressing news itself is bad enough for organizations which measure success or failure in millions of satisfied viewers; judged by the same criterion, painful but necessary measures of reform are pure poison. Hence, the large number of programs which do a reasonable job of presenting basic facts, but fail dismally to cope with the task of making sense out of them.

Two recent, rather lugubrious examples were CBS News's two-part special on *Where We Stand in Vietnam* (October 24 and November 7) and the Huntley-Brinkley Special Report, *Just a Year to Go* (NBC, November 10). The CBS shows certainly suggested that the ground "where we stand" is a lot less firm than it was when the network ran a series of programs with the same title in 1966. Charles Collingwood summed up by calling South Vietnam a sick society, suggesting that the war was merely the latest phase of an age-old Asian struggle, and implying that the U.S. had talked and fought her way in by inadvertence. But he still insisted that "commitment is like glue. Once it hardens, you can't get away from it!"

As its title suggests, the NBC feature was devoted to the forthcoming Presidential campaign. After a few scarifying film clips of urban riots, Vietnam battles, and Washington demonstrations, the program went on to demonstrate by means of public-opinion polls that no candidate, including the President, enjoys either the support of a majority of voters or public confidence that he has any answer to the pressing problems of the nation. Increasing general pessimism about Vietnam was shown to be matched by hardening attitudes on racial issues. Most people apparently don't think Negroes have a problem. But NBC was content, like CBS, to report the state of opinion and to hint delicately that the remedies proposed will not cure the communal disease. The program seemed to blame the politicians for not offering leadership, but a little self-criticism might have been in order. All that money spent on polls and ratings might be better invested in programs which investigate real possibilities of action rather than forever counting heads in a ritual of democratic narcissism.

* "Consensus Television," COMMENTARY, October 1965.

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WAR & PEACE

REPORT FROM IRON MOUNTAIN ON THE POSSIBILTY AND DESIRABILITY OF PEACE. With Introductory material by LEONARD C. LEWIN. *Dial. 109 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by HERBERT J. GANS

IT MUST BE public anxiety over the war in Vietnam. What else could account for the appearance of three books in two years, each a widely discussed best seller, which argue from scientific evidence that man is by nature warlike, and that war is here to stay?

In 1966, Robert Ardrey's *Territorial Imperative* and Konrad Lorenz's *On Aggression* reviewed studies of animal behavior to demonstrate the existence of instincts which force all animals, including man, to fight. Last year, 1967, brought *Report from Iron Mountain,* a book which uses social science data to suggest that human societies are held together by a "war system" without which other institutions could not exist. As the *Report* puts it: "War itself is the basic social system, within which other secondary modes of social organization conflict or conspire."

Despite the plethora of scientific data which all three books adduce, however, none of them has delivered sufficient proof of its theories. Ardrey and Lorenz extrapolated freely and often loosely from animal studies to man; the *Report from Iron Mountain* rests on even shakier evidence. Supposedly, this book is the product of a top-secret, three-year-long, government-sponsored study, conducted by illustrious and unnamed social scientists in the underground caverns of Iron Mountain, New York, and leaked by a guilt-ridden participant to Leonard C. Lewin. According to the literary and social-science grapevine, however, no such study ever took place; the *Report* was authored entirely by Lewin as a satirical attack on the Pentagon-funded war researchers who study the unstudyable.

The information from the grapevine has been confirmed, for me at least, by the internal evidence of the *Report* itself. Notwithstanding its generous use of technical jargon, the book is a poor imitation of social-science reasoning and style. The writing is much too terse; important terms are not defined sufficiently; sweeping conclusions are formulated without the qualifications that social scientists always make when they generalize, and empirical findings are presented without supporting evidence. The *Report* does not once cite figures either from the 604 statistical tables allegedly placed in an unpublished appendix or from the masses of other data which it claims were run through a computer. Still, even if the *Report* is a fabrication, its "findings" make an extremely significant point: war and the war system have come to have so many beneficial consequences for American society that if we do not plan beforehand for adequate substitutes, the advent of peace could shatter the economy and lead to pervasive social and political problems.

The *Report* begins by noting that a war economy stimulates domestic affluence, but puts greater stress on the fact that war expenditures allow governments to exert control over economic ups and downs. Because such expenditures can be allocated "entirely outside the framework of supply and demand," they are less subject to the corporate and electoral pressures which often force governments to subvert other regulatory economic schemes for political reasons.

The *Report* directs most of its attention, however, to the social, psychological, and political consequences of the war system. War, according to the *Report,* not only generates patriotic allegiance, which in turn increases social cohesion and undercuts domestic strife, but it justifies the very existence of nations. "The permanent possibility of war," the *Report* points out, "is the foundation for stable government; it supplies the basis for general acceptance of political authority." As a result, nations will often invent "external menaces" which can be fought in order to maintain domestic political peace.

In addition, wars provide outlets for society-wide feelings of aggression, create respectable roles for sadistic elements in the population, and put juvenile delinquents and youthful rebels in uniform so that they cannot disrupt domestic tranquility. War, the *Report* continues, is the most effective method of population control yet invented; it stimulates scientific inventions, and it encourages social change, for in a war climate, anachronistic social standards, such as Victorian sexual mores, can be overhauled quickly and quietly.

Peace will come, the *Report* argues, only if society can find "surrogates" for the functions of war that would be of equal effectiveness in guaranteeing its survival. Nevertheless, although the *Report* itself proposes a number of potential surrogates, and is very careful never to admit that peace is completely out of the question, its final conclusion is that "lasting peace, while not theoretically impossible, is probably unattainable; even if it could be achieved, it would almost certainly not be in the best interest of a stable society to achieve it." For example, anti-poverty and other social welfare programs can neither spend as much tax money as the war makers, nor be kept free of political considerations in a way that would make them useful for controlling cyclical fluctuations in the economy. Artificial external menaces, to take another example, would probably not deceive the populace. "Development of an acceptable threat from

HERBERT J. GANS *is senior research sociologist at the Center for Urban Education in New York. Mr. Gans, whose most recent book is* The Levittowners, *contributed "The Failure of Urban Renewal" to the April 1965 issue of* COMMENTARY.

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'outer space' . . . appears unpromising in terms of credibility," and artificially induced air pollution "raises questions of political acceptability." A quasi-military Peace Corps could not absorb all the delinquents and rebels, although "slavery, in a technologically modern and conceptually euphemized form, may prove a more efficient and flexible institution in this area." And finally, "purposeful blood games and rituals" to satisfy the popular need for aggressive outlets "can far more readily be devised than implemented."

THE *Report from Iron Mountain* can be—and to my mind ought to be—interpreted as a serious, if overly Machiavellian, attempt to understand and abolish war, but even then, some of its conclusions may be questioned. War, first of all, does not necessarily reduce domestic political conflict; the protest stirred by Vietnam is a happy example of just the opposite case. Also, governments spend freely for war not because such expenditures occur outside the economy of supply and demand, but because they are, like the space race, politically acceptable. Large-scale domestic expenditures, on the other hand, which benefit one region or class at the expense of another, are often voted down or emasculated by political opposition. Nevertheless, even war and space ventures can be financed only so long as they have public support; when the consensus disappears, as it did in France toward the end of the Algerian and Indochinese conflicts, war spending suffers the same political fate as progressive social welfare programs.

The surrogates for war described in the *Report,* secondly, seem to have been picked at least partly for their shock value, in order to demonstrate the amorality—or "military-style objectivity," as the *Report* calls it—of war researchers. It should be pointed out, however, that civilized surrogates for war are quite conceivable: aggression could be displaced onto national sport matches as well as onto blood games; public welfare schemes that cost 50 billion dollars a year could be formulated, and tax policies could be devised to deal with the business cycle. Federal job creation programs could eliminate juvenile delinquency more effectively than shipping youngsters off to war. And the Pill, not to mention the practice of voluntary birth control that comes with affluence, is as proficient as war in reducing excess population.

The implementation of such "liberal" surrogates would, however, violate one of the basic objectives of the *Report,* which is to guarantee not just the survival but also the stability of society. Although it nowhere defines "stability," this term is used throughout the *Report* to justify the suppression of domestic conflict, and to give yet more power to the present governmental and corporate establishment. The stable society obviously displays quasi-Fascist tendencies.

Undoubtedly there are Pentagon types who would favor such a society, and there are social researchers who, under the guise of a supposedly objective, tough-minded scientism, somehow always manage to produce conservative and reactionary policy proposals. In fact, this posture is not monopolized by students of war; it has been used by right-wing political scientists seeking to prove the unworkability of democracy, and by economists like Milton Friedman who skillfully demonstrate the "irrational" qualities of social welfare legislation in order to justify the imagined virtues of untrammeled private enterprise.

Hence, since the *Report*'s aim is a satirical attack on such researchers, it can appear to be planning for peace at the expense of democracy without batting a moral eyelash. Still, the unacceptability of this solution does not detract from the soundness of the *Report*'s basic thesis. War, after all, does have some deeply embedded social functions for which substitutes must be found, and peace cannot be achieved by plans for economic conversion which ignore the problems of societal reorganization. Even the *Report*'s hardboiled realism has some merit, for if peace is a worthwhile end, the means to achieve it must be determined by detached scientific methods, so that all the obstacles to peace can be identified and dealt with effectively.

But the prime value of *Report from Iron Mountain,* I think, lies in its contribution to our understanding of the war in Vietnam. For if one argues that America's national security is not at stake in Vietnam, that the cold war with Russia is about over, and that China's imperialistic aims are less ambitious than its imperialistic rhetoric—if, indeed, America is in some measure inventing an external menace—than the proposition is worth considering that the Vietnamese war persists in part because it performs a variety of domestic functions.

It is obvious, for instance, that the war acts as a crutch to the domestic economy for many of the reasons suggested by the *Report.* In addition, it functions as a source of internal cohesion, as an outlet for America's aggressive impulses, and as a dumping ground for many white and nonwhite poor who would otherwise be unemployed. But principally, I suspect, the war serves a function not really considered by the *Report*: it enables its advocates to defend an American way of life which is threatened less by foreign enemies than by tendencies in American society, and it permits them to believe that they can stave off the inevitable domestic social change that these tendencies will ultimately require.

Among the most important such tendencies are technological change, the proliferation of the centralized welfare state, the demands for political and cultural equality by many types of minorities, and the replacement of religion by new, secular moral codes. Shortly before American servicemen entered Vietnam in large numbers, the writers of the Manifesto of the Triple Revolution and other economists warned that sooner or later automation would begin to replace blue- and white-collar workers, and would lead to large-scale unemployment. The war's escalation, however, has resulted in a sizable increase in blue-collar jobs, temporarily halting both the debate over the dangers of automation and the widespread fear of unemployment. It is thus probably no coincidence that many blue-collar workers support the war, and are most antagonistic toward anti-war protesters. Other factory workers, as well as many lower-echelon

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white-collar workers, are disturbed by the disappearance of the petty entrepreneurial opportunities on which they have traditionally relied to achieve middle-class status—just as the characters in Norman Mailer's latest novel, *Why Are We in Vietnam?*, are threatened by the erosion of the last frontiers of anarchic laissez-faire that have made Texas what it is today. The more affluent white-collar group is upset by the advent of an increasingly centralized society in which the federal government is taking over powers that once belonged to the local governments controlled by the middle class; businessmen and self-employed professionals fear the burgeoning of welfare-state bureaucracy which is reducing many of their traditional rights and privileges, on the job and elsewhere.

All these groups are also threatened by the demands for equality coming from minorities that have previously acquiesced to inequality—Negroes, adolescents, and college students in particular—and by the continuing decline in religiosity, as well as by the revolution in sexual mores. I suspect that the people who most strongly support the war in Vietnam are also the staunchest opponents of integration, and of the new "youth cultures"; they include many Bible-Belt Protestants and observant Catholics for whom the war represents a religious crusade of the type preached by the late Cardinal Spellman.

Conversely, the main opposition to the war stems from those groups, especially the young, which are now demanding equality, and from the ranks of employed professionals like social workers and college professors who have achieved affluence because of the proliferation of the welfare state.

From the point of view of the hawks, then, there is considerable truth in the popular slogan that the war in Vietnam is being fought to preserve the American way of life. Indeed, the very image which is projected by hawks of the "enemy's" way of life serves to identify precisely those elements in American society which threaten them most directly. The Communist countries are seen as godless and immoral; their people are forced to work in large, government-controlled farms,

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factories, and offices, where they lack the freedom to display initiative; they are deprived of free expression and choice in consumer goods; and their way of life is dominated by huge central bureaucracies and by national political leaders who exert arbitrary, unaccountable, and insurmountable control over their everyday existence.

Now, all this is true of Communist societies, although not always to the extent claimed by the hawks, but it is also true, in a limited sense, of American society as well, albeit as a result of corporate no less than of governmental decisions. Moreover, the pattern is as difficult to reverse in America as it is in Communist countries. The point, however, is that even while attempting to reverse it at home, the supporters of the Vietnam war have also displaced an internal menace onto an external one. By locating this menace in a peasant society far from America's shores, and by decimating that society with a multi-billion dollar barrage of weapons, the supporters of the war have created for themselves the illusion that they are winning the struggle to preserve their way of life at home. Of course, they also support the war for simple nationalistic reasons, but the importance of the illusion accounts, I think, for many of the more peculiar domestic reactions to the war—for example, the view that the war is purely a result of North Vietnamese aggression, the inability to admit that the National Liberation Front is engaged in a civil war, and the willingness of Americans to support a reactionary South Vietnamese government which is also engaged in holding back social change.

CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, the *Report from Iron Mountain* mentions the war in Vietnam just once, in passing, even though references to the many domestic functions of that war would only have helped to strengthen its case. What is worse, the *Report* has created its own external menace; by attacking the social scientists who carry out war research, it diverts attention from the war system that hires them. And by presenting its ideas—significant though they may be—through the vehicle of a fabricated study group, the *Report* has only served to focus public debate on the question of whether or not it is a hoax, and away from the real issues of war and peace with which it deals.

THE HOLY CITY

JERUSALEM: A HISTORY. Edited by JACQUES BOUDET. Foreword by E. O. JAMES. *Putnam. 296 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by HAROLD FISCH

THIS lavishly illustrated work, remarkable for its beautiful photogravure and detail, will surely become a collector's piece. But history has us all by the throat, and books can be overtaken by events no less than nations and armies. This new book on Jerusalem has had a fate similar to that of the last publication of equivalent scope, namely *The Jerusalem City Plan* by Henry Kendall, published by the mandatory government on the eve of the British withdrawal from Palestine in 1948. That book too gave no hint of the revolutionary changes which, even as it was going to press, were about to engulf the Holy Land. Boudet's work bears the *nihil obstat* of a Roman Catholic priest and the *imprimatur* of a high dignitary of the Cathedral of Westminster dated March 1, 1967, but the publishers only succeeded in getting it out by October, by which time it was as out of date as if the *imprimatur* had been given in the Middle Ages. For if the history of Jerusalem goes back five thousand years, the decisive phase of that history as far as we now are concerned has occurred in the five months since the war of June 1967. On the other hand, had Dr. Boudet been able to do justice to the events of the last five months, and had he drawn out their full implications, it may be doubted whether the *imprimatur* would have been forthcoming at all.

The final pages of this curiously antiquated volume bear witness to the religious detente which prevailed before June 1967. There is a reproduction of the Chagall windows at the Hadassah hospital in the new city picturing the twelve tribes of Israel, the lion of Judah looking like a rather muscular donkey; then there is the photographer's impression of that amazing anachronism, the Pope worshipping at the Holy Sepulchre during his visit to Jerusalem in 1964; and finally and most ironically we see the faithful followers of Mohammed ascending the steps of the Dome of the Rock while in the background the sumptuous mosaics of Suleiman the Magnificent shed their Oriental splendor over the Temple compound. Here is the heart and crown of the city, the place where, according to Jewish tradition, heaven and earth meet, and peace eternally reigns.

THE RELIGIOUS status quo reflected in these pages has now been rudely and drastically revised—of that there can be no doubt. This does not mean that the Israel government is not sincere in its desire to assure religious rights and freedoms to the Christian and Moslem communities. That government, committed as it is to a secular interpretation of history, surely wishes it otherwise, but the truth is that a basic change in the religious balance of power has taken place, the end of which no one can foretell. Godfrey of Bouillon in the 11th century knew very well that he had come to place the Cross above the Crescent; Saladin, after driving out the Crusaders a hundred years later, knew equally well that his task was to tear down the Cross and restore the Dome of the Rock to Islam. For the Jewish soldier of 1967 the religious motive was more deeply buried, but the determination to restore the kingdom to the God of the Hebrews was powerfully at work beneath, just the same. What we are witnessing is not neutral history, but covenant history, biblical history if you like, with all the terrible revolutionary force, the promise and the challenge that that implies.

Superficially, at the present day, the three religions continue to perform their accustomed gestures. The Holy Sepulchre still beckons to

HAROLD FISCH, *a new contributor, is professor of English at Bar-Ilan University in Israel and the author of* The Dual Image *and* Jerusalem and Albion.

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its pilgrims from afar, but if the Pope were to pay a second visit now he would no longer stir memories, however faint, of the Latin kingdom and its hundred-years rule; the ground beneath has shifted. Now he would be the guest of the Jewish kingdom of Jerusalem, and no subtle avoidance of protocol such as the Vatican practiced so well in 1964 would avail to present the facts as other than they are. The mosque still summons the faithful to prayer, but from below, the confused noise of the Jewish worshippers at the vastly enlarged Western Wall disturbs the sanctity of Omar's courts, while thousands of Jewish visitors daily invade the Temple esplanade itself. If it is still a symbol for Islam, it is becoming an empty symbol, the ghostly shell of the past ironically mocked by the reality around it.

Power has indeed returned to Judah, but Judah as yet has no idea what it must do with it; it is even embarrassed at the extraordinary posture in which it now finds itself, looking suddenly like a veritable lion instead of Chagall's donkey. Mr. Eshkol was heard to say some little time after the war that for him the question of the new territories was how one wriggled out of them. It may be assumed that he no longer feels quite like this. For one thing Arab intransigence now as always drives Israel forward unwillingly on the path of self-fulfillment (de Gaulle would say, self-aggrandizement); but there is also a national awakening, a sense of what the Americans used to call "manifest destiny" making itself increasingly evident in the discussion of the problem among Israelis. We are reaching a point where for any Israel government withdrawal is becoming increasingly unthinkable. So we are left with the new frontiers of our new-old land, as Herzl called it, and with a reunited city of Jerusalem where we must stay and rule whether we like it or not; and to rule means to rule as Jews over the sacred places of the Nazarene and the prophet of Islam. Indeed, "The Lord gives strength to His people; the Lord blesses His people with peace." The last part of the verse seems far from realization, but the first part is upon us with an overpowering degree of relevance.

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The contradictions of Israeli policy are revealed by the curious episode of the prayer offered on the Temple Mount by Rabbi Shlomo Goren, Chief Chaplain of the Israel armed forces, on the Ninth of Av last summer. His invasion of the Temple compound caused more alarm and despondency among Israelis than among Moslems. The first reaction of the former was one of violent dissociation. Army, parliament, and press came down upon the erring rabbi to point out how utterly he had misunderstood the meaning of the Jewish return to the Old City, and how dangerously misleading would be the effect on the world of his romantic irresponsibility. The official rabbinate likewise dissociated itself, and notices were posted warning observant Jews that the Temple precinct was out of bounds. No more has been heard of Rabbi Goren's plan to reconsecrate part of the Temple Mount for Jewish worship. This is not because he is apt to accept the ruling of his fellow-rabbis (he has evidently worked out the halachic problems involved to his own satisfaction) but because, as a senior army officer, he is subject to the authority of the commander-in-chief. But now comes the interesting sequel. The army authorities have been at pains to remove the warning notices of the rabbinate, and in order to facilitate Jewish access to the Temple Mount, an additional gate has been opened up, circumventing the Moslem guard and the Wakf. The visitors do not come as pilgrims or worshippers, but their presence is surely for the Arabs as potent a demonstration of renascent Judaism as that of Rabbi Goren. History in short has us all by the throat, religious and non-religious alike.

We may well wonder what it is that arouses the curiosity of this endless stream of Jewish visitors to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount, for there is literally nothing of the Jewish past to be seen, except for a few scarcely accessible tombs and the Western Wall itself with its massive Herodian blocks. Boudet does well to point this out:

> So little remains that can still be seen at Jerusalem dating from the earliest periods, described and recounted by oral tradition, or written in the Scriptures. There is even less than of Paris, Rome, or Moscow: the walls of an esplanade, at the foot of which thousands of Jews have come to wail, and a few almost indecipherable signs carved in stone.

For the Romans were nothing if not thorough, and in their rage at the setbacks they had suffered during the Bar Kochba revolt, they completely destroyed the city, wiping out every vestige of its Jewish past. As far as the more recent past is concerned, the Arab Legion in 1948 completed the work of the Romans by razing to the ground the entire Jewish quarter, with its synagogues, its congested dwelling houses, and its many charitable institutions. There is thus nothing to see except what the imagination conjures up from the contours of the ground, the hills around, and the blue sky above. But the Jewish visitor is not in search of the past, and his eye does not seek to gratify itself on the ruins of ancient magnificence. He is in search of the future, and upon the rock which now nestles in the midst of a Moslem sanctuary he builds his church. Past and future come together in this most prophetic of cities, and for the Jew propelled forward as he now is by an unknown hand, there can be no doubt that what he envisions is a Jewish future which shall authenticate the Jewish present, and give power and meaning to the Jewish past.

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THE WRITER'S TEXT

DOSTOEVSKY, THE NOTEBOOKS FOR CRIME AND PUNISHMENT. Edited and translated by EDWARD WASIOLEK. *University of Chicago Press. 244 pp. $6.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH FRANK

THIS TRANSLATION of the notebooks for *Crime and Punishment* is the first instalment of a long-needed project. Despite Dostoevsky's enormous popularity, the basic scholarly material relevant to his work has not hitherto been accessible to English readers, though it has been available in Russian—and partially in French translations—for many years. Thus Professor Wasiolek can only be congratulated on his plan to translate all of Dostoevsky's notebooks for his major novels. (One assumes, though it is not mentioned in the announced list, that the recently-published notebooks for *A Raw Youth* will also be included.) If this plan is carried through, we shall have all of Dostoevsky's working notes, so far as they have been preserved, for the five major novels beginning with *Crime and Punishment* and ending with *The Brothers Karamazov*. This, to be sure, does not exhaust all the notebook material known to exist in Soviet archives—there are, for example notebooks dating from the important period of the early 1860's, just before the composition of *Notes from the Underground*, which are certainly of the utmost interest. But the Rus-

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JOSEPH FRANK, *who teaches comparative literature at Princeton, reviewed T. S. Eliot's* To Criticize the Critic *in the September 1966* COMMENTARY.

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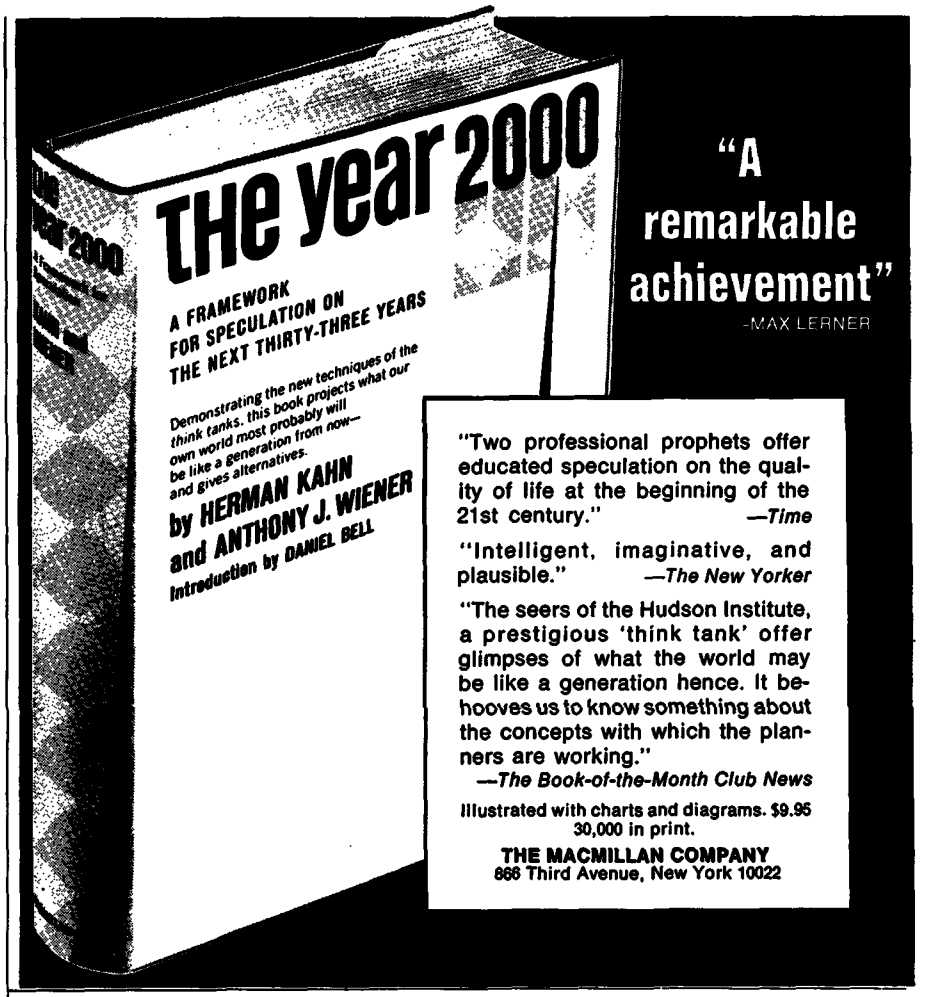
sians so far have refused to publish these manuscripts themselves, and have barred foreign scholars from access to them.

What are known as Dostoevsky's notebooks are, in reality, a heterogeneous mass of writings containing all sorts of material that the author wished to record or to remember. "They contain," writes Professor Wasiolek, "drawings, jottings about practical matters, doodlings of various sorts, calculations about pressing expenses, sketches, and random remarks." Dostoevsky simply flipped his notebooks open any time he wished to write, and proceeded to fill the first blank space he could find; hence there is no chronological sequence of any kind in his entries, though occasionally he included a date that helps to orient the reader. The so-called "notebooks" have been carved out of this mass of material by the Russian editors of the various volumes, who grouped together all the entries that could be related to one or another creative conception. There is, then, nothing systematic or even self-reflective in these notes, in the sense of an author both creating and at the same time observing himself create. Dostoevsky's thoughts—at least as recorded here—are all directed outward to the work he was striving to bring into being; his occasional moments of introspection or self-admonition invariably concern one or another problem that he was wrestling with in the course of composition.

WITH THE AID of the notebooks, it is possible to follow the composition of *Crime and Punishment* from its first inception to its conclusion. The book, we learn, was originally conceived as a long short story or novella to be written in the first person, and extensive fragments of this original work are to be found here intact. These fragments are in the form of Raskolnikov's confession, which was intended to recount the murder retrospectively after the process of repentance had already done its work. The book would thus have been formally much closer to *Notes from the Underground* than to the novel as it finally appeared. However, Dostoevsky abandoned his original idea in favor of the complex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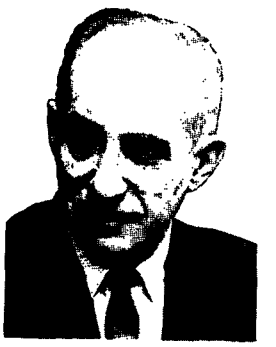

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drama of inner self-discovery that finally emerged as his first great masterpiece. This process of self-discovery was there from the very start, to be sure; in the letter outlining the first idea for the book, Dostoevsky writes that, after the murder, "unresolved questions arise before the murderer, unsuspected and unexpected feelings torment his heart." But this idea blossomed out into Raskolnikov's dialectic of inner evolution only when Dostoevsky abandoned the first-person form for the dramatic novel. The confession could only have begun *after* all the "unsuspected and unexpected feelings" had done their work; and so it would have been impossible to show them in action on Raskolnikov with the requisite force and unexpectedness.

The same letter also provides us with valuable information about the ideological genesis of the book. Dostoevsky describes the central figure as "a young man expelled from the university, a petty bourgeois by background, living in the most extreme poverty," who has "become obsessed with badly thought out ideas which happen to be in the air" and who decides to kill a useless old moneylender for the benefit of his family and, ultimately, of humanity. (A more literal translation of this passage would give "incomplete ideas" for Professor Wasiolek's "badly thought out." Literalness is preferable here precisely because Raskolnikov "completes" these ideas by putting them into practice.)

To anyone familiar with this period of Russian culture, it is clear that Dostoevsky can only be referring to the Utilitarian egoism which then formed the ethical basis of Russian radicalism. A doctrine which holds that everything can be justified in the name of the greatest happiness of the greatest number can logically lead—though it usually did not—to the kind of decision at which Raskolnikov arrived. At any rate, Dostoevsky believed that such an ideology, though it might begin with the noblest humanitarian motives, would ultimately result in unleashing the purely self-centered and diabolic egoism that was an ineluctable possibility of the human psyche especially under extreme conditions of deprivation and despair. The aim of the book is to dramatize this belief objectively through Raskolnikov's tragedy, and also to bring Raskolnikov himself to a recognition of its truth. Hence the movement of the book from one motive for the crime (the humanitarian) to the gradual revelation of the coldly egoistic hatred for mankind (the Superman motive) which provides the emotional dynamism for Raskolnikov's deed. These two motives, incidentally, are linked together in the very first pages as the two sides of the same coin. The Superman motive is not tacked on arbitrarily in the later pages, as so many critics have—incomprehensibly—contended, but is clearly foreshadowed both implicitly (by Raskolnikov's behavior) and explicitly (in the crucial tavern-conversation that Raskolnikov overhears just before the murder).

Professor Wasiolek has supplemented the text of the notebooks with an introduction, and also with a commentary summarizing the material in each of the separate sections. His comments on Dostoevsky's artistry and on the workings of his creative imagination are accurate and apropos, and should help to destroy the erroneous legends of Dostoevsky as a half-demented, erratic genius or as a journalistic hack. Since the work of the Russian Formalists in the 1920's, it has hardly been news that Dostoevsky was acutely aware of the problems of his craft, and, as the notebooks show, continually kept them in mind. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how anyone could ever have thought otherwise when confronted with a work as classically controlled as *Crime and Punishment*. But all this is certainly worth repeating for the benefit of English readers exclusively nourished on the melodramatic nonsense that so often passes for Dostoevsky criticism. One should add, at the same time, that Dostoevsky would have had no sympathy with Flaubert's ambition to write a work about nothing, sustained only by the sheer force of its style. Dostoevsky's artistry was always in the service of a passionate involvement with the moral-social experience of his time; and as Prof. Wasiolek remarks perceptively, his "creative imagination moves usually from conceptual framework to circumstantial elaboration, from general to particular, from schema to narrative fact." Dostoevsky, in other words, always started with a general thematic idea—not a situation or a character, though the idea might involve a particular *type* of character—and then tried to imagine the concrete actions that would best express his theme. Most of the entries in the notebooks are imaginative variations of such schematic actions, which he altered freely in every possible combination until he hit on the one that best satisfied his creative instinct.

If Professor Wasiolek had limited his commentary to such helpful and illuminating observations, there would be little left to do except to compliment him on a difficult task admirably brought to completion. Unfortunately, however, he could not resist the temptation to use his commentary as a platform from which to argue for his own particular (and very dubious) reading of *Crime and Punishment*; and in so doing he woefully mishandles what should be the proper relation between the notebooks and the text. To those (presumably Formalists or New Critics) who would argue that the notebooks are unimportant and even misleading because "the novel is before us, and it alone contains what Dostoevsky wanted to say," Professor Wasiolek rightly answers that it is absurd not to try and use everything we have that might cast light on the book. But he himself appears to forget that what should control such usage is the finished text: the notebooks are relevant only to the extent that they help us to understand what the author actually wrote. The great danger is to use them to substitute what the author might have written, and what the commentator would have liked him to write, for what he actually *did* write. Time and again this is precisely what Professor Wasiolek does in his commentary; and the result can only be deplored, especially if one thinks of the authority his remarks are likely to exercise over the unwary student and the inexpert reader.

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Disregarding the entire ideological context in which the book was conceived, and which had so much importance for Dostoevsky, Professor Wasiolek prefers to see it in broadly psychoanalytic terms. For him Raskolnikov committed the murder not for any of the reasons given in the text but out of a need for self-punishment—though he concedes that it requires some "refined analysis [?] to see that he [Raskolnikov] craves what he is aggressively against." But, he remarks triumphantly, "in the notebooks his self-punishing traits stand out sharply." The sentences quoted to prove this point do not seem to me to have anything to do with a need for self-punishment; but even if they did, the fact that Dostoevsky weakened them in the book would argue *against* giving them undue artistic importance.

Even more hypothetical and extravagant is the notion that, in killing the old moneylender, Raskolnikov symbolically murdered his mother, and that he nourished incestuous feelings toward his sister. "One wonders" writes Professor Wasiolek, "why Dostoevsky felt it necessary to veil the love-hate relationship that comes out clearly in the notebooks and only dimly in the novel." Once again, the material cited to prove this "love-hate relationship" with his family can easily be explained in terms of a particular stage in Raskolnikov's inner evolution after the crime; it is simply inaccurate to pretend that the same feelings about his mother and sister prevail throughout. And, it may be suggested, the reason why Dostoevsky "veiled" this material was that he was not writing the novel Professor Wasiolek wishes he had—a novel whose psychoanalytic significance would have been clear to all, and which would not have required the "refined analysis" now so regrettably necessary.

These critical excrescences, to be sure, do not injure the value and the merit of Profesor Wasiolek's scholarly contribution to Dostoevsky studies in English. But one hopes that in his future editions of the notebooks he will follow the example of the Russian editors, and draw a sharp distinction between his speculative readings and his textual commentary.

SOVIETOLOGY

THE FATE OF THE REVOLUTION: INTERPRETATIONS OF SOVIET HISTORY. By WALTER LAQUEUR. *Macmillan. 216 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by ADAM B. ULAM

MR. LAQUEUR HAS boldly ventured where few would have the courage to follow. In 202 pages, he proposes to describe and appraise the vast and controversial body of literature about the Bolshevik Revolution and Soviet history. He proceeds with unusual skill and brings great erudition to his task. The general reader as well as the harassed college teacher will feel grateful for this reliable guide to what to read about the Revolution and its great figures, what to reject as historical fantasy, and what aspects of even the most renowned books on the subject are to be treated with caution or skepticism.

But by the same token, there are certain, perhaps inevitable, defects in such an ambitious undertaking. In the first place, Mr. Laqueur demands both too much and too little of the historian. The ideal historian of the Soviet Union, he writes, "will be steeped in epistemology and armed against excessive relativism. . . . he will of course write as well as Gibbon . . ." etc., etc. Those are, indeed, admirable desiderata, but the first task of the historian is much simpler and more important. Like Sergeant Friday in *Dragnet*, he must ask: What are the facts? If, instead, he beats around the bush talking about things like the "underlying reality," and the "objective truth," he fails as a historian, even if he be endowed with all the literary skill of a Gibbon or the dazzling philosophico-historical insights of a Burckhardt. Thus Trotsky's *History* is a splendid literary work, but its value as history is almost immediately vitiated by his statement that the *March* Revolution "was led by conscious workers educated for the most part by the

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party of Lenin." It simply was not so, as Trotsky must have known, and as is irrefutably established by the composition of the first Petrograd Soviet. Is it churlish to expect of a brilliant writer and partisan strict adherence to historical truth? Does he not compensate for its absence, and more, by the majestic sweep of his narrative and the dramatic evocation of a great historical event? But Maxim Gorky, who was not without literary talent and who came to be a warm partisan of the Soviet system, could still write of the *Bolshevik* Revolution that it was the work of a "numerically tiny group of the intelligentsia leading a few thousand workers who had been indoctrinated by it." In other words, ideological allegiance does not have to lead to the distortion of facts, or be offered as an excuse for it.

In all fairness, it must be said that Mr. Laqueur takes cognizance of this problem, if somewhat obliquely, in his discussion of the late Isaac Deutscher's works and his occasional flights into fantasy when no hard facts are available. But the trouble with Deutscher lies not so much in his sins of commission; after all, every reader will recognize that he could not have been present at the meeting of the Politburo during which the dramatic confrontation between Khrushchev and Molotov allegedly took place. Deutscher is much more to be blamed for the sins of omission. Thus, having worked on the Trotsky papers, he must have known that Trotsky's version of his relations with Stalin and Lenin during the latter's illness is at variance with the facts of the case, as attested by the documents in the Trotsky Archive. Nevertheless, in his biography of Trotsky, Deutscher chose to follow Trotsky's version, rather than the evidence of the documents which cast grave doubt on Trotsky's veracity in this matter.

MR. LAQUEUR'S CRITIQUE of the foibles of various historical approaches is mixed with a certain tolerance: he appreciates the difficulty of writing objectively about great revolutions. But his comparison of the Russian with the French Revolution and the travails of its historians is not a completely apt one. After all, in 1839, France had not been ruled for fifty years by the Jacobins, who had suppressed all references to some of the most important figures of the Revolution, vilified some others, and refused French and foreign scholars access to some of the most important documents of their history. The huge presence of the Soviet Union acts as an inhibiting if not intimidating influence on the researches of even the most independent foreign scholars: how can a historian quarrel with history? Mr. Laqueur detects this syndrome in the works of E. H. Carr. "If Mr. Carr is perhaps less a prisoner of the past than other historians, his perspective is more affected by what he considers the wave of the future." He proceeds to substantiate this judgment by analyzing Carr's *Weltanschauung*, and the shifts that have been made in it over the past three decades. No one would deny, of

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course, that a historian has the right to his own philosophy of history, the right to emphasize what he thinks is important, and to de-emphasize—provided he does not suppress—what he feels is secondary in the sweep of events. Mr. Carr has viewed Soviet history as a logical evolution of certain economic and political institutions. He has severely eschewed sensationalism and the excessive belief in the importance of personalities, and he has reprimanded those historians who have a tendency to moralize. This is certainly a legitimate point of view—and one, moreover, which we might expect would be treated with sympathy by the Soviets. Alas, Mr. Carr and his fellow believers in the Grim Forces of History were dealt an unkind blow by none other than Nikita Khrushchev. The former Premier, through his successive denunciations of Stalin's crimes, created untold difficulties for the school of historiography which contends that "it is not Stalin but the Gosplan which is important."

Mr. Laqueur's tilts with his Western colleagues leave him but little space to consider the Soviet historians. To be sure, of their efforts after roughly 1930 and until quite recently, the less said the better. But in the early days of the Bolshevik regime journals such as the *Proletarian Revolution* were a veritable mine of information about the history of the Revolution, the radical movements, and the leading Soviet personalities. The narratives were often written with candor and an open mind, literary grace, and wit. I, personally, for instance, found them a revelation while working on my life of Lenin, a needed reminder of how warmly human some of the makers of the Revolution were, and of how that event cannot be entirely explained or summarized by Marx, terror, or the Gosplan. Not that there is any lack of documents of sheer horror from those days—I am reminded in particular of a completely unselfconscious book detailing the activity of the *Cheka*. The point is, however, that the contemporary Soviet historian, while freed from the worst restrictions of the period of the "cult of personality," still has a way to go before he achieves the freedom, not to mention the *élan*, of his Bolshevik predecessor.

Indeed, the predicament of the Soviet historian of today is not that he lives in a situation of complete tyranny, but that current history is constantly undergoing shifting ideological and political appraisals by the ruling oligarchy. At the time of the "thaw" in 1956, an eager doctoral candidate published a monograph on American intervention in Siberia entitled *The Shadow of the Dollar*. Then warmly received, it came, only a year later, under severe attack. The very title, wrote an ideologically vigilant critic, demonstrates the author's revisionist proclivities. Is not a shadow something light and insubstantial? Does not the author slyly attempt to imply that the American intervention was not a serious and major undertaking? Such are the difficulties under which the Soviet historian labors.

But before we assume a superior or condescending attitude toward the troubles of our Soviet colleagues, we might do well to ponder how much of Western writing on the USSR has made itself subject, not to the edicts of a central committee, to be sure, but to historical fads and current political passions. Of this lamentable fact, Mr. Laqueur's book is a valuable reminder, an admirable plea for balance in the treatment of the most tangled and controversial events of our times.

A NEW JOURNAL

NEW AMERICAN REVIEW No. 1. Edited by THEODORE SOLOTAROFF. *New American Library. 278 pp. $.95*

Reviewed by TONY TANNER

AN ANTHOLOGY such as this, bringing together a wide variety of pieces from some thirty contributors, poses a problem for the reviewer. The range of stories,

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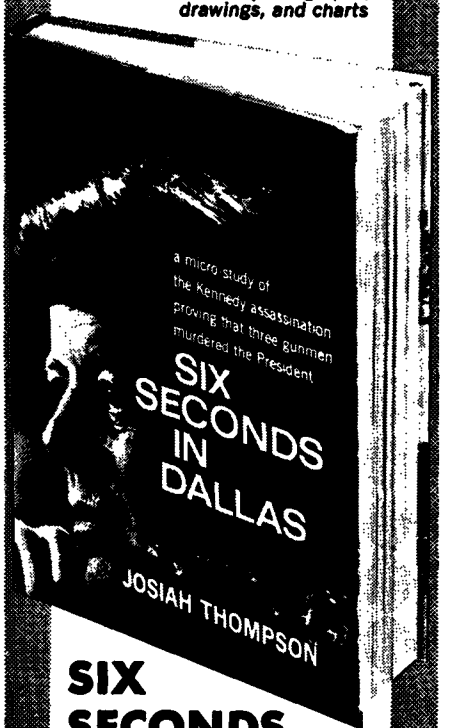

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poems, and articles here gathered together strikes me as furnishing particularly good value for the money, but the volume is something of a sampler, and I would hesitate to make strong commendations or assured predictions on the basis of a single poem or a short piece of prose. Instead, I have chosen to imagine myself as someone with little prior knowledge about contemporary America who tries to infer from this collection what are the prevailing preoccupations and states of mind in that country. That is, I have taken leave to adopt the common American strategy of a certain amount of deliberate naivete in an attempt to assess the contemporary pressures as refracted through this anthology. What would I single out?

The slowly mounting horror of the first story—"The Room" by Victor Kolpacoff—might give me a clue to much that follows. Cramped together inside a small room in a strange land are a selection of people to whom enforced proximity means increased hostility: some American soldiers who are getting more anxious for a release into violence, minute by minute; a young Vietnamese boy, terrified but uncooperative under constant, mind-eroding interrogation; a Vietnamese interrogator politically on the side of the Americans yet clearly sharing some deeper understanding with his fellow-countryman; and the narrator, an American soldier, himself a prisoner of the American army, who has nevertheless been forced to be present at this gruesome and miserably confused confrontation. The narrator simply wants to "get out": "I did not want to get involved." But is there any way out of that ghastly hut, littered with the sinister tools of Western technology, the air throbbing with latent interracial violence and hatred? A cockroach burrowing helplessly at a metal wall seems to contain a lesson. "If it was patient and went all the way around, behind the heels of the other men in the room, it might find its way out; if not, it was its own fault." The room gets smaller, offering no hiding place, and, finally sick of the gathering atmosphere, the narrator walks out of the door. But the relief of the uncontaminated air is temporary. A fence of barbed wire has been thrown up around the hut "and we were alone inside of it."

I might well decide that this pattern of claustrophic constriction, unwilling implication, and the thwarted desire for escape into freer air was not limited to Kolpacoff's account of an incident in an horrific foreign war. Ronald Sukenick's story, "The Kite," concerns a man who has locked himself away in a "hole in the wall . . . trying to disentangle myself and rise above the stale contradictions of my life," and who emerges into the alien streets at least to arrive at a metaphor for his aspiration. For he is soon disentangling the knotted string of a kite which finally rises above all the contradictions of the city life and, like Thoreau's hawk, sports in fields of air alone. The fact that a passing tug snarls the string of the kite, dragging it down into the cold river, has a moral which is clear for all to see. I might detect another side to this yearning for release in "Swan Feast" by William Mathes, a distinctly unpleasant account of some men on a hunting weekend who go berserk after watching a hired colored couple put on a sex show (it "opened us up like tins of rotten meat"). What is doubtless intended to be a depiction of demonic and Dionysiac fury and destruction is in fact gratuitously nasty and unconvincing (nasty *because* unconvincing). Nevertheless, I would add that image of the tins of rotten meat to those of the room and the kite.

It would be with relief that I turned to Philip Roth's fine piece "The Jewish Blues," if only because of the author's authentic comic energy. Is there anyone now writing in America who can excel Roth in catching all the lacerating details of family pressures and discords? At the same time, I would detect a real desperation in the obsessive recounting of the most intimate physical details of his Jewish childhood, a desperation in which a deep sense of involvement in his family and people turns into a violent revulsion against the exacting constrictions of an imposed identity. "Jew Jew Jew Jew Jew Jew! It is coming out of my ears already, the saga of the suffering Jews. Do me a favor, my people, and stick your suffering heritage up your suffering ass—*I happen also to be a human being*!" And once again I would note that longing for an escape into clear space, as when the narrator describes his happiness at playing center field. "Doctor, you don't know what a sanctuary that outfield was to me. You can't imagine how truly glorious it is out there, so alone in all that space." But the escape into untrammeled singleness is as uncertain, if not as foredoomed, for the rebellious Jewish youth in America as it is for the unwilling American soldier in Vietnam. It appears there are all sorts of stifling rooms difficult to get out of in contemporary America.

NOT LEAST the room of self, I may conclude. For I could not help but notice that every story in this collection is a monologue and that where the narrator is not manifestly self-obsessed, he nevertheless insists on prowling forever around the perimeters of his own experience. Or her experience, as in the piece by Grace Paley called "Faith: In a Tree" in which Faith readily succumbs to the unexamined logic of the proposition "I have to tell you. . . ." and unloads on us the gossip of the day, mainly about children and neighbors. As gossip it is vivid, racy stuff, but when Faith says "Mrs. Finn knows my problems because I do not keep them to myself" I might irrelevantly wonder how Mrs. Finn is shaping up these days, particularly as Faith expresses herself in phrases like "But me, the creation of His soft second thought. . . ." Indeed, it is particularly noticeable how all these young American writers seem to go to unusual lengths to create their own rhetoric. Often the most important energy of a story is not to be found in the action (which may be trivial or even non-existent), but in the language (which is often highly idiosyncratic and inventive). Faith makes an interesting point in this connection when she says, "My language limitations here are real. My vocabulary is adequate for writing notes and keeping journals, but absolutely useless for an active moral life."

The addiction to description rather than, say, an exploration of

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the complexities of human interaction or the necessary evaluations of behavior, is a distinguishing characteristic of the whole volume. It is entirely appropriate that one of the more interesting stories in the collection is written simply as a journal with lots of little sub-headings like "weather," "my house," "a person," or "vital data." This is William Gass's "In the Heart of the Heart of the Country," and the fragmentation of his presentation is in part a projection of his own feelings of unrelatedness. There is his isolate consciousness, and there are the desolate Midwestern things that he perceives, but the explaining links are missing. Like so many figures in American literature, this narrator is a watcher rather than a doer; he climbs tree stumps and looks. He lives much alone inside the house of himself, and peers out at an inhabited vacancy. "My window is a grave . . . we meet on the window, the world and I, inelegantly, swimmers of the glass; and swung wrong way round to one another, the world seems in." He envies the purposeful flies that settle on rotting fruit because they are "windowless with respect to one another." Reflecting on the implications of this and other stories, I think I would infer that mixed up with the yearning to be alone and free, there is a deep anxiety about being cut-off and separate. It seems that the window that keeps the world away from you keeps you away from the world.

The poems would go some way toward reinforcing my speculations. In "The Touch," Anne Sexton writes about the difficulties of proper contact: "For months my hand had been sealed off/in a tin box. Nothing was there but subway railings." John Ashbery in "Decoy" starts with items of "urban chaos" and ends with man and wife "waking far apart on the bed, the two of them." Urban chaos and ugliness also prompt some of the other poems. Barbara Howes watches an accident in the street beneath her; Louise Gluck stares at the wretched images of humanity on a Chicago train. And poem after poem testifies to the unavoidable presence of violence: it presses on the nerves, throbs in the mind, and vibrates unsteadily, sometimes hysterically, in the language. Like the deer in Alan Duggan's poem, the American poet seems "rightly addicted to shock." With the poetry everywhere registering such pressures, I think I would be unsure how exactly to take Richard Eberhart's "To the Mad Poets." "Happy are the mad," he says, and he celebrates them "In an ecstasy of Fantasia,/Resolving every dilemma." If I were coming to this writing from a calmer culture I might well think that the American poet is forced to see life unsteadily and see it partial. But I would also note the vigor moving around in the language, and a capacity for vivid response which often compensates for the relative absence of thought.

TURNING TO the articles, I would quickly realize that the problems of separation and relative impotence which turn up in the literature are part of a more general anxiety about some sort of failure, on the part of American education, to produce a fully active, confident, citizenry. From Stanley Kauffmann I learn the full extent of the hostility to high standards among American theatergoers (and owners) who should be better educated then previous audiences. Richard Gilman tells me in no uncertain manner that a recent bit of undergraduate humor called *MacBird!* contains "a nihilism more profound and sweeping, although also more shoddy and literally insincere, than any we have ever known before in our public life." Wondering at these fulminations, I think I would take as a clue Gilman's complaint that the play is aimed not just at LBJ "but at all politicians and indeed at politics itself." At this point I should begin to conclude that this is all part of a larger worry about the abdication of educated people from responsible political life.

From Theodore Roszak's angry but well-documented indictment, "The Complacencies of the Academy," I learn that "we do not have an intellectually responsible politics in America, very largely because the single largest intellectual interest group in our society—the learned professions—has opted out

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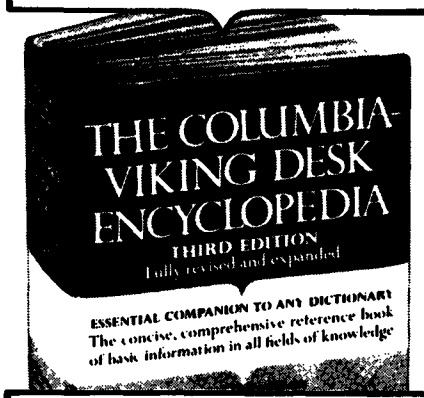
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of politics, except where it defends the status quo." (From recent newspaper reports I would probably decide that this is not totally true in every case any longer.) In place of what he sees as the present division and deformation of academic activities into either "meaningless research" or "mindless collaboration," Roszak wants to resurrect the figure of the *philosophe*, the man who puts his knowledge and values to work in the public realm. This is a clarion call, and although I think it is harder to turn thought into action than Roszak believes, remembering the situation in the first story I think I would understand the urgency of the summons.

Returning to pieces about the private life, I would be bound to notice a range of worries which often come back to some vague sense that the average American is not in full contact with the reality of his existence. In a lively and intelligent piece attacking the foolish notion that homosexual art speaks only to other homosexuals, Benjamin DeMott points out that the homosexual is more likely to experience more of those "tasking encounters with himself and others" which are vital "to anyone whose art depends finally upon his ability to experience dailiness rather than simply pass through it, to inhabit moment to moment reality, to be aware of present time. . . ." (In another piece Keith Botsford writes that "The Youngers are the only ones absolutely at home in the present tense.")

This feeling that those people who are not fully assimilated to the community might enjoy a fuller participation in present reality is familiar enough, but it seems unusually persistent in America. I might guess that it was connected with those uncertainties about identity and self which continually show up in a variety of contexts. This might explain for me why Genet seems to be attracting an increasing amount of attention and admiration. George Dennison in his exposition of "The Legend of Genet" sees him as a man who negated all usual forms of dialogue and created an entirely new self outside of history—"the end result is an identity which cannot be assimilated, an *otherness* which is petrified, permanently frozen in its unlikeness—in short, a Saint of Evil." But meanwhile, back in history, identity is eminently assailable and quite ordinary evil abounds. Perhaps, as I concluded my survey of this volume, I would take away with me that image of the diminishing room, the incipient violence, and the anguished spectator longing to get out. But among other things that room is history, and exits are illusory because there is barbed wire just outside the door. So, where now?

ABANDONING the mask of naivete I would only add at this point that it sometimes seems to me that a lot of contemporary American writers are trapped inside certain recurrent image patterns and situations which begin to look increasingly familiar the harder one stares. There are many new and spirited formulations in this anthology; but not many new directions. And meanwhile that room gets smaller and smaller.

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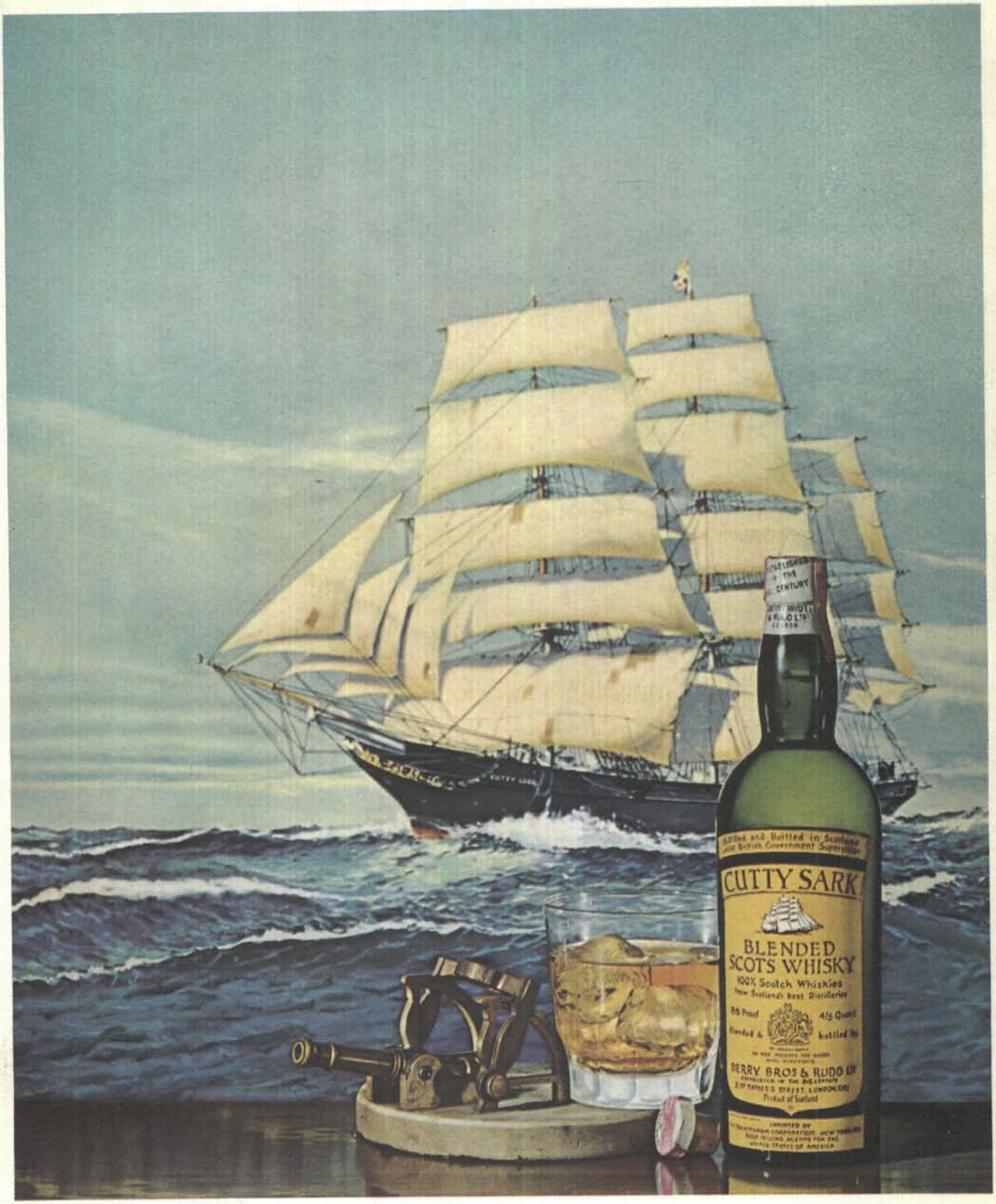

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